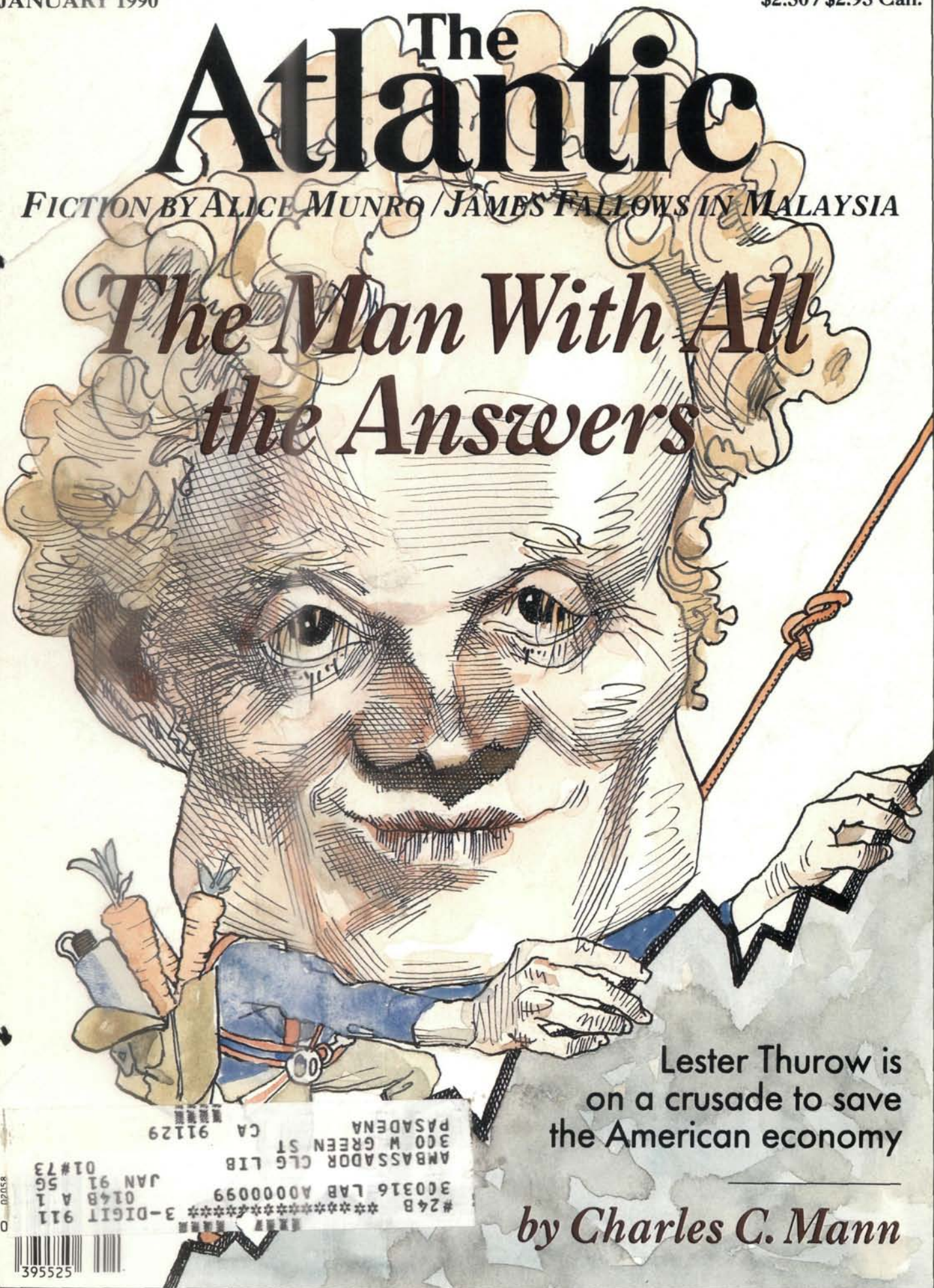


The Atlantic

FICTION BY ALICE MUNRO / JAMES FALLOWS IN MALAYSIA

The Man With All the Answers



Lester Thurow is
on a crusade to save
the American economy

by Charles C. Mann

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usually reserved for luxury sedans.

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up the ES 250's six-speaker AM/FM cassette audio system.

This high-output audio design is standard equipment. Yet it provides a level of high fidelity many other luxury

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armakers might consider optional. With the Lexus ES 250, the audiophile need opt only for the state-of-the-art compact Disc player.)

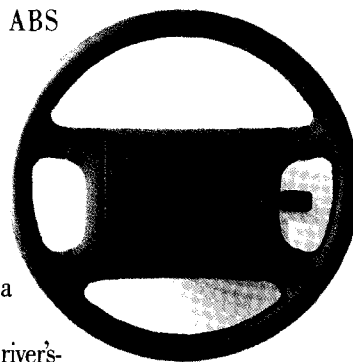
but richly textured bird's-eye maple. Of course, these are luxuries you can savor without ever leaving the showroom. But get the ES 250 sedan out

Or the responsiveness of the ES 250's handling—control that gives new meaning to the term “maneuverability.”

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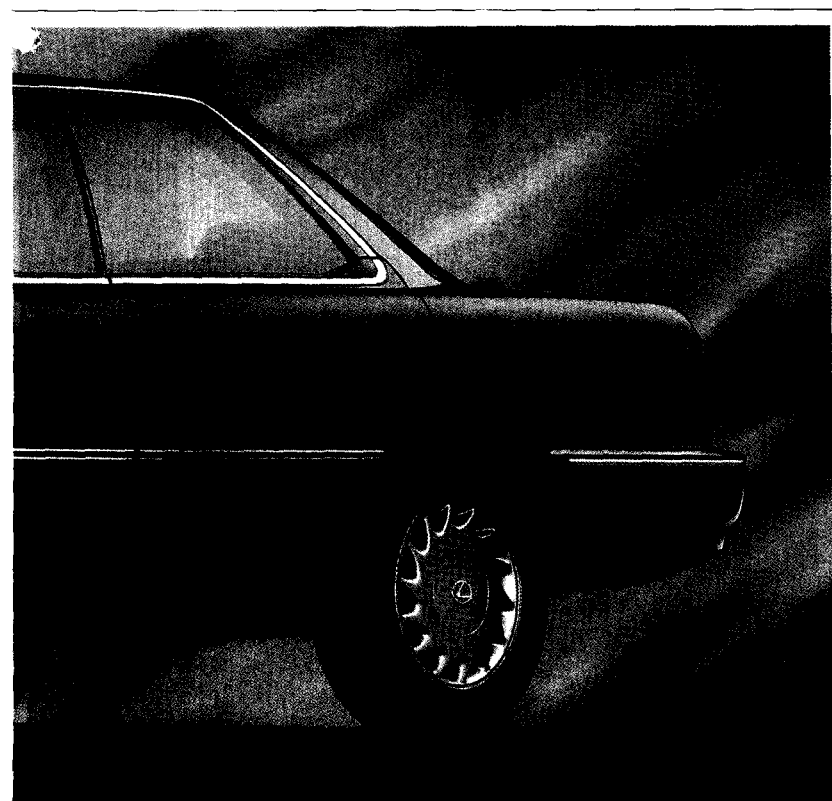


side airbag Supplemental Restraint System (SRS), shown above.

But then, steering clear of trouble is easy in an ES 250, thanks to its front-wheel drive, sports-tuned suspension and Goodyear Eagle GA radial tires—developed especially for Lexus. Again, it's all standard.

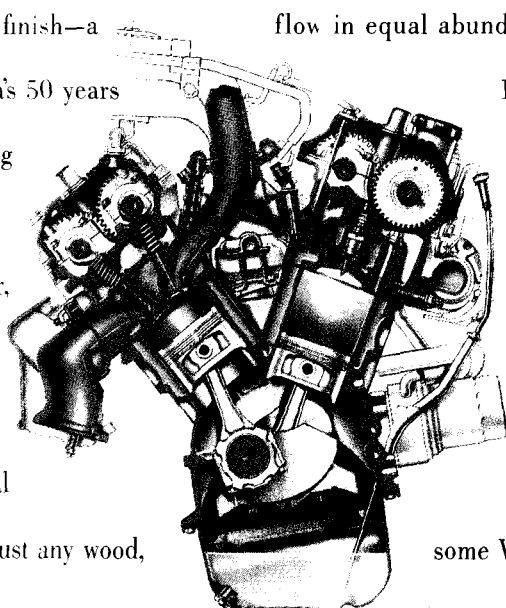
Steering clear of people who tell you less is more should be easier from now on, too.

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The ES 250 also displays a high level of fit and finish—a legacy of Toyota's 50 years of car-building experience.

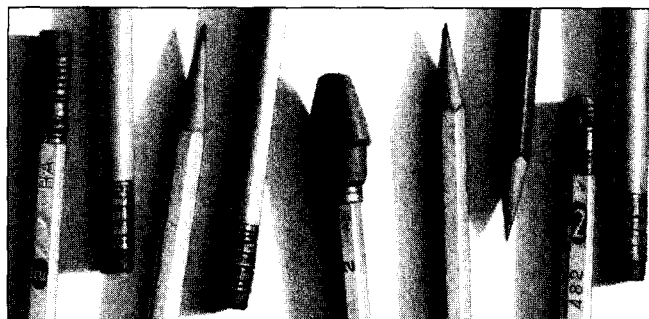
Its interior, for example, is lavishly appointed with real wood. And not just any wood,



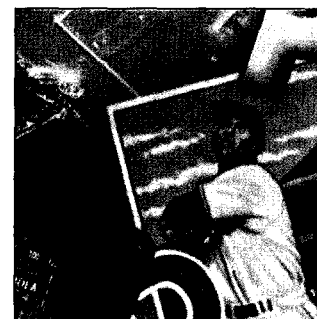
on the open road and its pleasures flow in equal abundance. Like the 156 horsepower that flows from the Lexus ES 250's Four-Cam, 24-valve V6 engine—power even some V8s can't match.



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The economist Lester Thurow is a man of action: he rides on newspapers and magazines to America's homes, calling out warnings like a latter-day Paul Revere. And he's an optimist. America may have a million problems, but Thurow has a million solutions.

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He called himself *Wa-Sha-Quon-Asin*, He-Who-Flies-by-Night, or Grey Owl. Though little known in the United States, this writer-in-headress became one of the great North American environmentalists—the peer, perhaps, of John Muir and Rachel Carson. But who exactly was he?

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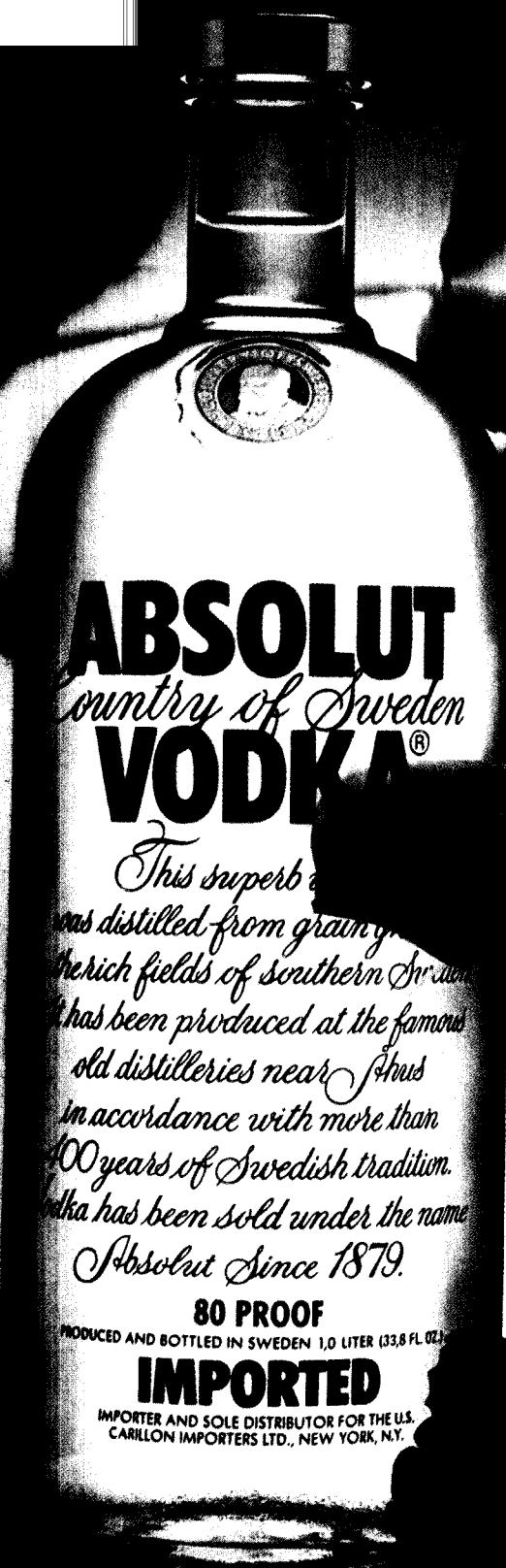
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AS READERS OF THE "Letters to the Editor" section know, from time to time people write to tell us that we made a mistake. The Vernal Equinox, they may point out, is a phenomenon of the spring, not the fall. George S. Patton's pistols were ivory-handled, not pearl-handled. Upper Volta should be called Burkina Faso.

Our mistakes happen in public. What readers don't see is the careful checking—and correcting—that happens in private. *The Atlantic Monthly* set up a fact-checking department in 1981. Today every piece of copy that will appear in the magazine is combed through by one of four checkers, who attempts to verify every number, every spelling, every quote, every fact. The checkers typically begin by retracing the author's steps, reading what he read, talking to the people he talked to; eventually they broaden the inquiry to embrace other sources. If an article is especially complicated, a checker may be detailed to work on that article exclusively for the month. Often articles are sent to outside experts for comment. Writers find the fact-checking process to be a terrible blessing—it is onerous and time-consuming, and it

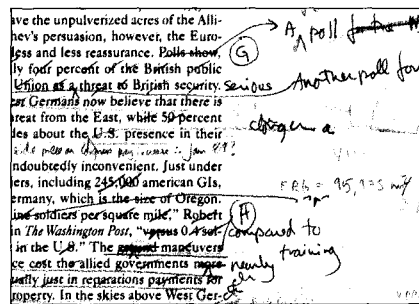
brings peace of mind. Impressed by the checking of the excerpt we published from his novel *Lincoln* (May, 1984), Gore Vidal hired the checker to review the rest of the book.

The sagas of fact-checking are spun around legendary "saves." But the job is not purely defensive. In the course of working on an article a checker often strays into brave new

worlds of knowledge, and returns with souvenirs. Sometimes these are trivia—the discovery, for example, that the Harry S. Truman Library puts a period after the S, as Harry S Truman frequently didn't. But they may be substantive as well as piquant. In "The Coming Global Boom," our cover story last October, Charles R. Morris had cause to mention a television advertisement for Chrysler in which jet aircraft streak across the sky, spewing red, white, and blue exhaust,

as the words "Here's to You, America" appear on the screen. The checker learned that the jets used in the ad were made in France, a fact that drove home the point Morris wanted to make, about the rapid erosion of national distinctions in big business. Morris got out a pair of parentheses and added some words to his piece.

—THE EDITORS



A fact-checker's gallery

CONTRIBUTORS

CHARLES C. MANN ("The Man With All the Answers") is a writer who lives in New York City. Mann is a co-author, with Robert P. Crease, of *The Second Creation: Makers of the Revolution in Twentieth Century Physics* (1986), and a co-translator, with the late Dale McAdoo, of three plays by Dario Fo. Mann was a co-author, with Mark L. Plummer, of "The Big Headache," which was *The Atlantic's* cover story in October of 1988. An expanded version of that article will be published as a book next fall.

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The January Almanac was compiled with the assistance of Gail Cleere, of the U.S. Naval Observatory; Ted Moncrieff; the Air Transport Association of America; Dr. Martin C. Carey, of Brigham and Women's Hospital, in Boston; *Publishers Weekly*; and WGBH, Boston.

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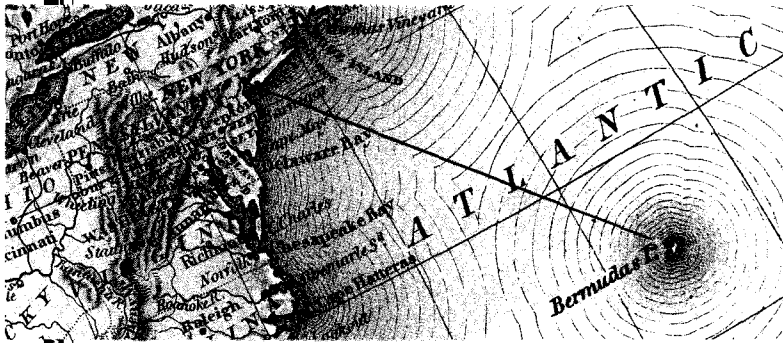


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These fortunate island travelers will always remember the charming Scandinavian natives, the magnificent dining room, the artful creations of the European chefs.

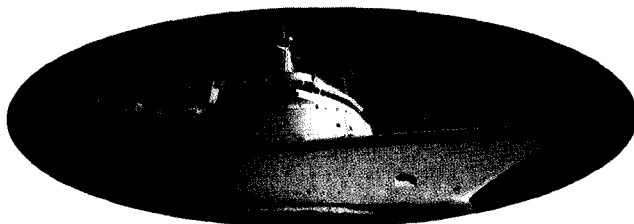


They will forever recall a quiet corner of deck, the company of a good book, and the warm breeze off the Gulf Stream. Once again comes a tap at the door, a white-gloved waiter, and morning tea 300 miles from landfall.

ROYAL VIKING STAR



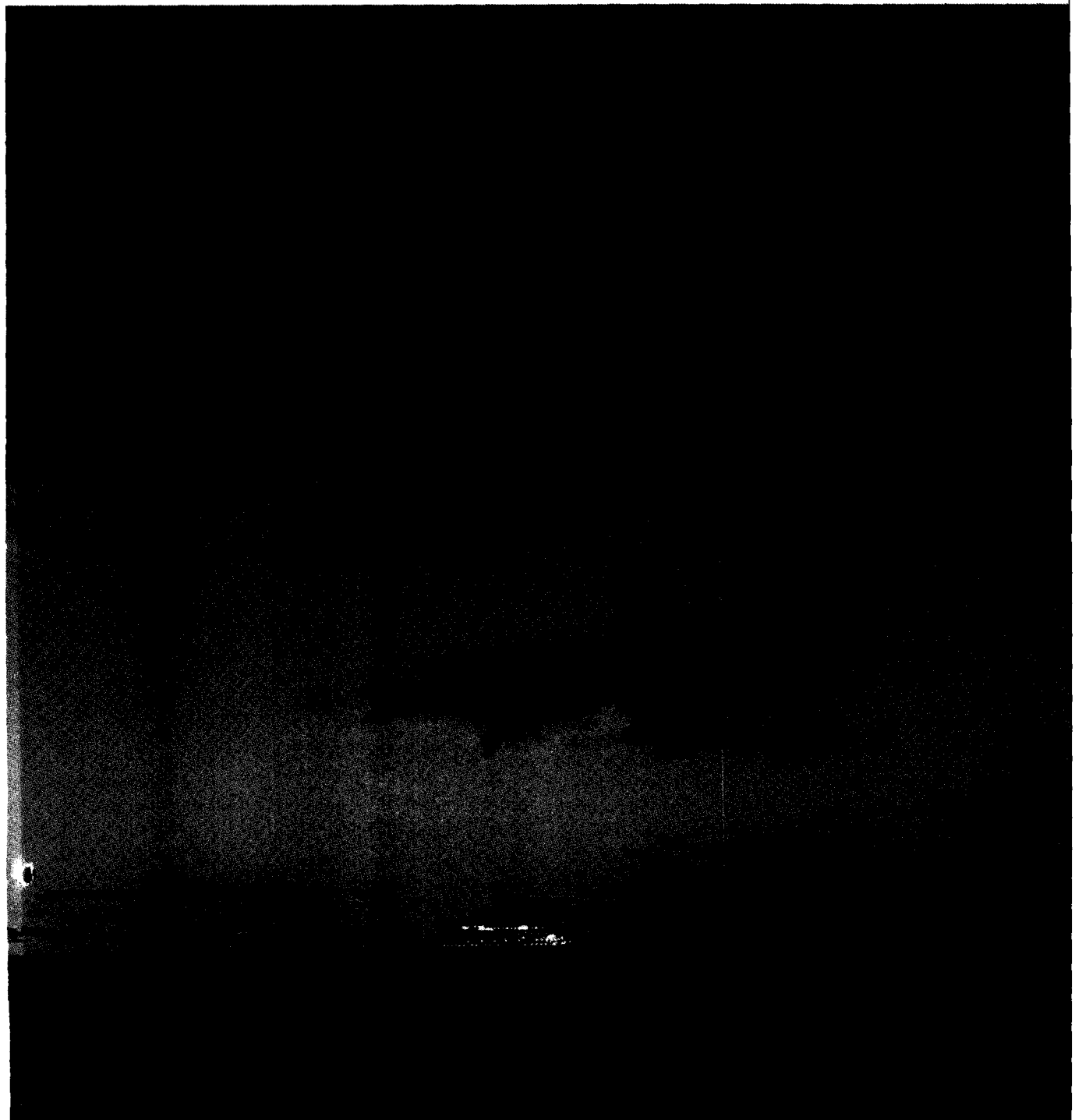
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



"THE CHOLESTEROL MYTH," The Atlantic's September cover story, elicited an unusually large response from both the press and the public. We offer here a selection of the letters we received, edited to represent the views of all those who questioned the article. Though neither a scientist nor a doctor, Thomas Moore, the author, is an experienced investigative reporter who became interested in, and decided to write about, objections to the National Cholesterol Education Program which had long been raised in leading medical journals. His article was reviewed carefully before publication by prominent scientists on both sides of the cholesterol issue.

Because of space limitations, we are unable to print more than a small sampling of the large number of letters we received criticizing or supporting the article, from doctors, scientists, and other readers. Nor have we included a number of long letters describing various maladies that the writers attributed to the drug lovastatin. The first five letters here are from representatives of the National Cholesterol Education Program.

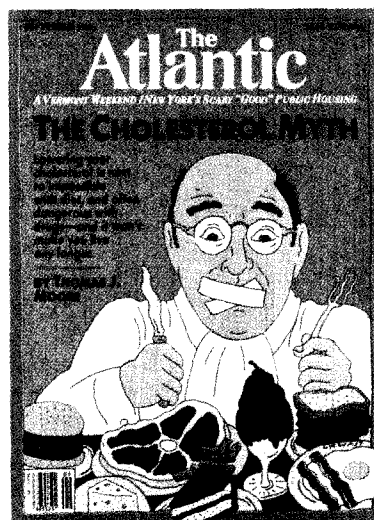
Thomas Moore contends that lowering high blood-cholesterol levels will produce little if any reduction in the risk of coronary heart disease. Regrettably, his article contains so many errors and omissions that it may mislead the American public into becoming complacent about high blood cholesterol. That would be tragic, because high blood cholesterol is an important cause of coronary heart disease, and coronary heart disease is the number-one killer of men and women in the United States.

Most medical scientists, not only in the United States but across the industrialized world, believe that high blood cholesterol is an important cause of coronary heart disease—and that it is one of three major risk factors that people can do something about, the other two being smoking and high blood pressure. This scientific consensus underpins widespread agreement among organizations concerned about the health of Americans that a concerted program of cholesterol

education is not only warranted but required. More than thirty-five such organizations joined the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute to launch the National Cholesterol Education Program in 1985, and the European Atherosclerosis Society has called for similar programs for its nineteen member populations.

High blood cholesterol is a risk factor for coronary heart disease not only in middle-aged males but also in the elderly and women. The Framingham Heart Study has long shown that in the elderly, LDL cholesterol (so-called "bad cholesterol") is a predictor of coronary heart disease, and it and other

studies have shown total cholesterol levels to be predictors in the elderly. Coronary heart disease is so much more common in older age groups that even a moderate reduction in risk has the potential to produce a large reduction in heart attacks. The data show that coronary-heart-disease rates among women increase rapidly after menopause and



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even catch up with those of men, and that high blood cholesterol is an important factor in this rise.

Moore is simply wrong when he contends that the findings of the Coronary Primary Prevention Trial were not statistically significant. A thorough scientific review found them fully significant, and the study's well-supported conclusion is that lowering high blood cholesterol will reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. Moore fails to mention the Cholesterol Lowering Atherosclerosis Study (CLAS). Confirming the results of some previous studies, CLAS provided x-ray evidence that substantially lowering cholesterol with diet and drugs produces slowed progression and even reversal of the fatty plaques in coronary arteries. Moore has distorted the findings of the Helsinki Heart Study. Far from challenging the notion that LDL cholesterol is a cause of coronary heart disease, the Helsinki study showed that a substantial part of the proved reduction in heart attacks in the study came from lowering LDL. Raising HDL also accounted for part of the reduction, and this has expanded our knowledge about the role of HDL in coronary heart disease—as is to be expected in a complex field where much has yet to be learned.

Moore also fails to mention many other lines of evidence about the benefits of lowering cholesterol, such as the numerous experiments and observations in many different animal species showing that acquired or spontaneous high blood cholesterol damages arteries and causes heart disease. He is also mute about the fifteen-year follow-up of the nicotinic-acid-treated group of the Coronary Drug Project, and about the Oslo and Stockholm studies, each of which has shown reductions in total as well as in cardiovascular mortality.

It is astonishing to suggest that diet is not significant in determining the level of blood cholesterol or the risk of heart disease. The evidence for these relationships has been very recently and exhaustively reviewed by a committee of the National Research Council, almost all of whose members were unconnected with the National Cholesterol Education Program. The committee's *Report on Diet and Health* concluded unequivocally that high levels of saturated fat and cholesterol in the

American diet raise blood-cholesterol levels, and that reducing these elements in diet will reduce blood-cholesterol levels and coronary-heart-disease rates. The 1988 Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health arrived at the same conclusion. The *Atlantic* article also does not mention a series of studies that shows what can be accomplished in people who are choosing their own diets with clinical counseling. For example, the Finnish Mental Hospital Study, the Oslo Heart Study, and the L. A.-V. A. Domiciliary Study all demonstrated a 10 to 15 percent reduction in blood-cholesterol levels with diet alone in large numbers of people over long periods of time. Most Americans can expect to lower their high blood cholesterol with diet alone.

Measurement of blood-cholesterol levels can be done accurately, as more than a decade's experience in the lipid-research clinics shows. Moreover, the tools for making the necessary improvements in accuracy are readily available. Standard reference materials can be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control, the National Bureau of Standards, and the College of American Pathologists, and laboratories can ensure the accuracy of their results with these materials. There is preliminary evidence that accuracy is already improving—and the public can be assured that conscientious efforts by physicians and laboratory directors can produce accurate cholesterol measurements today. In addition, the treatment guidelines of the National Cholesterol Education Program call for repeated measurements before a treatment program is initiated—and this helps safeguard the accurate classification of patients.

Cholesterol-lowering drugs have an essential role to play in preventing coronary heart disease for those people who have tried dietary therapy for three to six months and still have unacceptably high levels of LDL cholesterol. The primary treatment for high blood cholesterol is diet—but those who are still at greatly increased risk after an intensive effort at diet need somehow to lower their cholesterol levels. For these people the benefits of drug treatment outweigh the infrequent risks, which are present whenever drugs are used. Drugs are distinctly secondary for most people with high blood cholesterol; in those who need

drug treatment, the side effects can be watched for and controlled.

More than 500,000 men and women die from coronary heart disease each year, and the annual economic toll is more than \$110 billion (including direct costs and lost productivity). Some 60 million adult Americans have cholesterol levels that, either alone or in combination with other risk factors, significantly raise their risk of coronary heart disease. Would it be conscionable to do nothing about this problem?

CLAUDE LENFANT, M.D.

Director

*National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
Bethesda, Md.*

As chairman of the 1984 NIH Consensus Conference on Lowering Blood Cholesterol to Prevent Heart Disease, I take strong exception to Thomas J. Moore's misleading and potentially destructive article. I will confine myself to his three "headers," all of which I think are wrong:

1. "Diet has hardly any effect on your cholesterol level." Moore himself cites the National Heart-Diet Study, which showed that cholesterol levels were lowered on average by 10.8 percent in a randomly selected group of people. Now, that may sound like a small effect, but the results of some fourteen studies in which cholesterol levels were lowered by diet treatment or by drug treatment have shown that a 10 percent drop in cholesterol level will probably reduce the heart-attack rate by 20 percent. That would mean preventing about 100,000 of the 500,000 fatal heart attacks that occur in the United States every year.

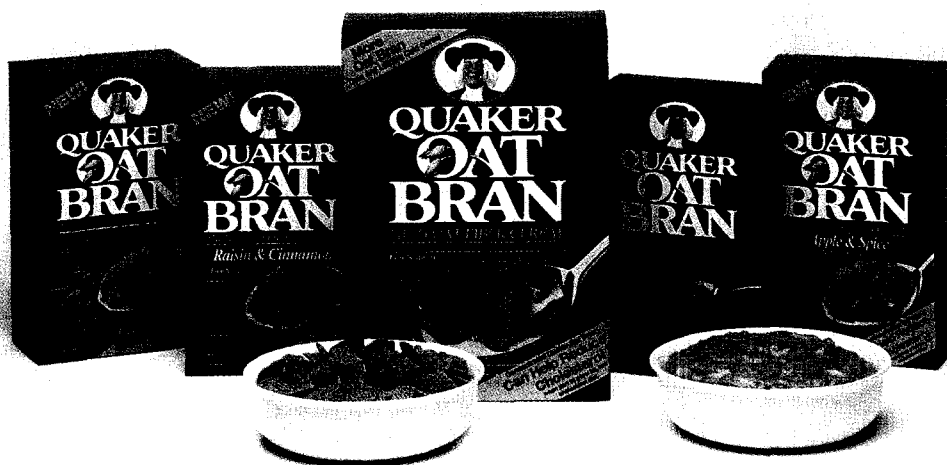
2. "The drugs that can lower [blood-cholesterol level] often have serious or fatal side effects." That is just not true. The drugs in current use for lowering cholesterol levels have remarkably few side effects and, to my knowledge, no fatal side effects. Moore must be referring to drugs no longer in use because they *did* have serious side effects (dextrothyroxine and estrogenic hormone, as used in the Coronary Drug Project).

3. "There is no evidence at all that lowering your cholesterol level will lengthen your life." A statistically significant decrease in both fatal and non-fatal heart attacks has been demonstrated as a result of cholesterol-lowering in a large number of studies. Yet the total mortality from all causes

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nevertheless failed to show a significant decrease *during the study*. There is no real paradox here. These studies have generally lasted only five to seven years, and the total number of deaths in both the control groups and the treated groups has been (thank goodness) small, too small for us to *expect* to see a statistically significant decrease in total mortality. During the Coronary Drug Project, for example, treatment with nicotinic acid lowered cholesterol levels and caused a highly significant decrease in coronary events. Yet there was no significant decrease in total mortality. However, when the men were followed for an additional nine years, there *was* a significant decrease in mortality from all causes (Canner and co-workers, *J. Am. Coll. Cardiol.* 1986, 8:1245-1255).

Note also that in countries with diets like that recommended by the American Heart Association and by the NIH Consensus Conference, cholesterol levels are lower, coronary-heart-disease rates are lower, and longevity is also greater. Finally, *even if* longevity were not increased at all, one might prefer not to spend one's last decades as a cardiac cripple or undergoing repeated coronary-bypass surgery.

Is there a 100 percent consensus on the currently recommended guidelines for diet? Probably not. Is there a 98 percent consensus? Probably there is. Moore's article is not a balanced and reasonable assessment of the evidence.

Finally, the assessment of costs is off base with regard to the public-health approach to diet. For a few years the National Cholesterol Education Program will be spending money to educate people on diet. Once that spade-work has been done and people have adapted to the new diet, there will be no costs. You can't beat that cost-benefit ratio!

DANIEL STEINBERG, M.D.
*Professor of Medicine
Division of Endocrinology and
Metabolism
University of California, San Diego*

Thomas Moore makes much of the fact that many of the leading investigators in the area of research on cholesterol show up on advisory committees, both for the government and for private industry, as if that were in some way remarkable. I know of no scientific field or other public-policy area

where experts are not called on, and properly so.

Moore implies that the greed of pharmaceutical companies and physicians has played some major role and, in fact, has formed the basis for the financing of the "coalition" and the exclusion of dissenters. He fails to mention, however, the strong opposition to many of the cholesterol-heart-disease study results which came in years past from elements of the food industry, including the dairy, egg, and meat lobbies—groups that have substantial resources at their disposal. To their everlasting credit, these industries have now concluded that the cholesterol story is valid.

Typical of Moore's selective attention to data is his discussion of the substantial decline in coronary mortality which has been observed over the past twenty-five years. He hurriedly dismisses any role for cholesterol, ignoring analyses by Goldman in 1984 and Slatterly in 1988 that link declines in saturated-fat intake in the American population to this decline in coronary mortality. He completely ignores accumulating evidence that dietary cholesterol and saturated fat may predict the risk of coronary artery disease, even independent of their effect on circulating cholesterol levels.

JOHN C. LAROSA, M.D.
*Dean for Clinical Affairs
The George Washington University
Medical Center
Washington, D.C.*

Thomas Moore discounts diet as an important cause of high blood cholesterol, despite evidence to the contrary from epidemiology, clinical trials, and laboratory animals.

Next he indicates that cholesterol-lowering drugs are highly toxic and even increase risk of death. This simply is not true. As a class, cholesterol-lowering drugs are relatively safe.

It should be pointed out that the costs of cholesterol management, like those of computers, will go down progressively with time, and although the total national bill for detection and management will be high, the cost per individual will be acceptable.

SCOTT M. GRUNDY, M.D.
*Professor of Internal Medicine
and Biochemistry
The University of Texas Southwestern
Medical Center at Dallas*

At the Second International Conference on preventive cardiology, Richard Peto, one of the world's leading epidemiologists, concluded, based on data from MR. FIT and other long-term dietary intervention trials, that a 10 percent reduction in serum cholesterol is associated with a 20 percent decrease in coronary artery disease; over longer periods of time, even accounting for statistical error, this reduction would produce a 30 percent reduction in risk for cardiovascular disease. Has Moore offered a sophisticated analysis that would topple that presented at the conference?

Clinical trial research is extraordinarily complex and requires the careful review of all raw data by a multi-institutional team of experts—not an individual or a group from a single study site—to gain consensus as to the proper outcome management policy. While Moore used a number of quotes taken from various sources to support his claims, did he obtain consensus from top medical and epidemiological authorities who agree with his sweeping statements?

GEORGE L. BLACKBURN, M.D.
*New England Deaconess Hospital
Boston, Mass.*

Thomas Moore cites several studies of dietary treatment of elevated cholesterol to support the notion that cholesterol can be lowered only five or six percent through diet. In fact NIH studies showed that cholesterol levels can easily be lowered 25 percent, and studies of vegetarians at Harvard and elsewhere have shown cholesterol levels averaging less than 150, versus the U.S. average of over 200. Those vegetarians follow the macrobiotic diet, similar to the traditional Japanese diet. These exceptionally low cholesterol levels are similar to cholesterol levels of the Japanese. That the low cholesterol and correspondingly low incidence of coronary disease in Japan are determined by diet rather than by genetic factors was proved long ago by migration studies showing that Japanese Americans have cholesterol levels and heart-attack rates similar to those of their Occidental neighbors.

Moore states that the falling incidence of coronary disease cannot be related to cholesterol levels, which he says did not change while the rate of coronary disease decreased. Wrong

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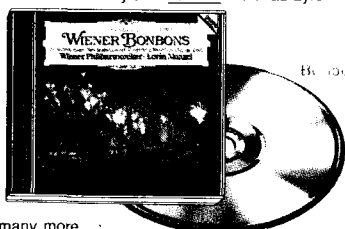
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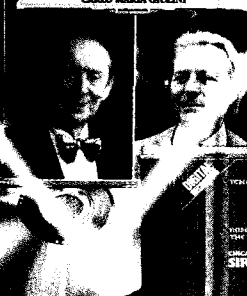


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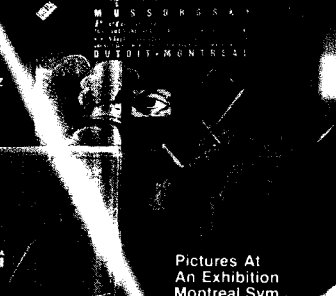
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again. Dr. Lee Goldman, of Harvard University, has studied the phenomenon of the decline of coronary disease and concludes that approximately one third of the observed decrease is due to the decline in cholesterol levels from averages in the 220s in the 1960s to current levels below 210. Americans have been consuming less butter and whole milk, leaner meat, and more poultry, fish, grains, fruits, and vegetables. The consequent drop in cholesterol has saved numerous lives—190,000 from 1968 to 1976 alone, according to Dr. Goldman's calculations.

DAVID C. DODSON, M.D.
*Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine
Boston University Medical Center*

Thomas Moore does a great disservice to millions of people for whom cholesterol is indeed a health risk. People with total cholesterol values above the 95th percentile are not a vanishing minority, as the author implies, but by definition account for five percent of the population, or more than 12 million Americans. This group includes more than a million families with genetic propensities for high LDL, low HDL, or both. Although only a small fraction of the population, these people account for about 50 percent of *early* heart disease (heart attacks before age fifty-five in men, for example). For these people, lowering total serum cholesterol or raising HDL may be life-saving in a real sense—resulting in much more than the “three days to three months” average increase in life expectancy typical with cholesterol treatment. In our hospital's lipid program it is not unusual to see five-year-old children with cholesterol values substantially greater than 240 mg/dl, referred because their fathers or grandfathers had heart attacks at age thirty-one or thirty-five.

Whatever his opinion of the National Cholesterol Education Program, Moore has a bizarre idea of what constitutes a “modest” hazard of high cholesterol. The table of data deduced from the MR. FIT report suggests that a person is *three times as likely to die from heart disease* if his cholesterol is greater than 245 mg/dl. He is almost twice as likely to die from all causes, and the bulk of the differences is in fact the difference in heart disease. People with intermediate cholesterol values have intermediate risk because, as the stud-

ies show, there is no point with a sharp drop-off in risk. Risk of heart disease isn't really a linear function of the cholesterol level, however: patients with cholesterol values of 400 mg/dl have ten times the average risk of heart disease. These people are not so rare as Moore seems to believe.

Side effects of the various medications are accurately described by Moore, but strangely equated with one another. The flushing from niacin and bloating from cholestyramine are in fact bothersome enough for many patients to keep them from taking these medications for life, but these are reversible and trivial, compared with cataracts from triparanol. Furthermore, a large fraction of patients tolerate these medications perfectly well, with no side effects to speak of.

ELLIS NEUFELD, M.D.
*The Children's Hospital
Boston, Mass.*

Thomas Moore's statement that “cancer is not the only hazard that has been associated with low cholesterol” implies that the association between serum cholesterol and cancer has been firmly established—which is not true. There is no evidence that lowering serum cholesterol causes cancer.

For colon cancer, the concern is with high amounts of cholesterol in the *intestine*. The theory is that high amounts of cholesterol in the intestine, from both dietary cholesterol and bile, are broken down by bacteria to compounds that may initiate or promote tumor growth.

International studies show that countries with the lowest serum-cholesterol levels and lowest dietary-cholesterol intake have a lower incidence of colon cancer. The National Cancer Institute recommends that Americans reduce their intake of all dietary fats to less than 30 percent of total calories—a diet that in all likelihood will be sufficiently low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol to decrease risk of both heart disease and some types of cancers.

PETER GREENWALD, M.D.
*Director, Division of Cancer Prevention
and Control
National Cancer Institute
Bethesda, Md.*

Thomas Moore fails to appreciate that the “medically supervised” diet (rest assured that nine out of ten

physicians do not supervise diets, as they are not trained to do so; rather, any physician worth her/his salt will refer the client to a registered dietitian) that millions of Americans are being asked to follow is the very same diet that our past honorable Surgeon General Everett Koop, the American Diabetes Association, the National Cancer Institute, the American Cancer Society, the American Dietetic Association, and, yes, the American Heart Association have asked Americans to follow. It is a diet reduced in animal fat and animal protein, and increased in fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. It is the diet that has been shown to combat obesity; reduce risk for cancers of the colon, breast, prostate, and lung; help regulate blood sugar; and even decrease serum-cholesterol levels. One can quibble regarding the percentage-point reduction in serum cholesterol that this mode of eating affords, Mr. Moore, but please do not overlook its significant public-health benefits, and please do not imply that such a diet is not safe.

MARY E. FARKAS
*Registered Dietitian
Ukiah, Calif.*

In general Thomas Moore's discussion of statistics was oversimplified, but particularly offensive was his description of the one-tailed test of significance as “a more lenient standard” found “deep in the fine print of statistical theory.” This test is usually taught early in an introductory statistics course. It is used, for example, when one is comparing a new treatment to a standard treatment or when one suspects that if a treatment has an effect, it will occur in one direction only. Therefore this test may be more appropriate for experiments on cholesterol and cardiovascular disease than the two-tailed test.

JAMES C. FLEET, Ph.D.
*Human Nutrition Research Center
on Aging
Tufts University
Boston, Mass.*

Thomas Moore's review of the cholesterol field refers to the newest medicine in this field, Mevacor (lovastatin). I have been responsible for the clinical studies on this agent since they began, in 1980, and would like to offer some perspective that your readers



might welcome, particularly those who are among the one million Americans currently taking Mevacor.

Addressing the matter of side effects of treatment, Moore cites studies encompassing 1,000 patients in which there were twelve cardiovascular deaths. However, your readers should know that eleven of the twelve patients who died had advanced coronary heart disease before taking the drug, and that the treating physicians did not attribute any of the deaths to the therapy. In a recently completed study 8,000 patients took lovastatin or a placebo (dummy tablets) for a year. The patients taking lovastatin had no more heart attacks and cardiovascular deaths than the patients taking the placebo. Clearly, lovastatin does not cause heart attacks or cardiovascular deaths.

It should be made very clear that Mevacor is chemically unrelated to triparanol, an early anti-cholesterol drug mentioned in the article. Mevacor works at a different site in the cholesterol-biosynthesis pathway and does not share the toxicity of triparanol. However, Mevacor is chemically similar to compactin, another drug mentioned in the article. In animal studies at more than 100 times the human dose, Mevacor did not produce the problems that allegedly plagued compactin, a Japanese product that was never marketed.

Mevacor has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the regulatory agencies of more than twenty other countries. Studies to demonstrate effects on coronary disease take many years to complete, and none of these agencies has thought it reasonable to delay approval on these grounds. Several long-term studies on Mevacor and its closely related sister drug, simvastatin, are well under way, with the first results due in 1991.

In summary, Mevacor (lovastatin) is a well-tolerated, very effective, and widely accepted drug.

JONATHAN A. TOBERT, M.D.
*Executive Director, Clinical Research
Merck Sharp & Dohme
Research Laboratories
Rahway, N.J.*

"The Cholesterol Myth" will be required reading for students enrolled in my course on the science of food. For years I have taught that the relationship between cholesterol and

heart disease is largely hypothetical and unproved. Thomas Moore's article is a deadly accurate synopsis of how public policy has been fabricated without scientific support.

KEN LEE, PH.D.
*Associate Professor of Food Science
The University of Wisconsin at Madison*

Bravo! Thomas Moore has penetrated the hard shell of the Cholesterol Crusade to expose the soft core of an uncertain hypothesis. His article will shock those who have for so long and in such total certainty railed against the evils of cholesterol.

SAMUEL J. ARNOLD, M.D.
Morristown, N.J.

While American eating habits clearly need to be changed, and dietary fat intake is clearly in some fashion related to the incidence of coronary artery disease, the leap to mass screening of asymptomatic people and the blanket recommendation of therapy with not necessarily harmless or effective drugs seem at the very least hasty, for all the reasons Moore points out. As happens in many areas of medicine, people who most need education frequently do not get it, while those who are least in need are often overinstructed.

As a cardiologist, I often see sophisticated patients, at low risk for coronary disease and sometimes elderly, who have no symptoms or objective abnormalities but who have become obsessed with their cholesterol levels and the need to lower them. As with most things where clear answers are unavailable, moderation seems in order. Moore's article provides it, and I am distributing copies of it to those of my patients who appear in need of a more balanced perspective.

CLIFFORD N. HARRIS, M.D.
Los Angeles, Calif.

As a teacher of cardiovascular medicine, and as one of the "dis-senters" referred to in the article by Thomas Moore, I was elated to read such a well-researched treatise on one of Madison Avenue's most phenomenal efforts, by which virtually our whole nation has been turned into hand-wringing neurotics, living each day tormented by the level of their serum cholesterol.

Those of us—and there are many—

who have been trying to stem the tide of this campaign by simply presenting the data objectively to the various scientific groups have experienced just what Moore referred to. That is to say, speaking engagements, honoraria, and expenses are available only if you spout the party line.

RALPH D. LACH, M.D.
*Director, Cardiac Care Unit
Mount Carmel Medical Center
Clinical Assistant Professor of Cardiology
Ohio State University College of Medicine
Columbus, Ohio*

As a practicing internist, I welcomed "The Cholesterol Myth." As Moore suggests, it has surprisingly enough been the frontline practitioner, with the day-to-day responsibility for modifying people's lives, who has been most skeptical about the magic of lipid-modifying diets and drugs. Such reticence is not easy to maintain in the face of fervid conviction on the part of nearly every patient that his entire health status can now be coded into a three-digit number. We "providers" of health care are no match for the disinformation machinery of national publicity campaigns (of which, by the way, the cholesterol mania is only the latest and largest); the temptation is to give in and join the frenzy lest one be presumed uninformed, when in fact the opposite may be the case.

Moore has erred, I think, in calling the cholesterol studies "failures." They are no worse in design and execution than most clinical-research projects, which are notoriously beset with difficulties: things don't work, people don't cooperate, too many uncontrolled variables surface. Furthermore, a negative study is as good as a positive one—that is, if the researchist accepts his results with equipoise. Moore's salient contribution is to point out that the conclusions from the data are flawed and that current public action deriving from such conclusions is inappropriate.

Thanks to Thomas Moore for his research, courage, and perspicacity.

WILLIAM C. WATERS III, M.D.
Atlanta, Ga.

I was very impressed with Thomas Moore's article. Since 1958 I have been actively engaged in the investigation of the effect of diet upon serum lipids and lipoproteins in both animals



and man, and I consider myself well acquainted with all the research that has gone on during the past three decades, particularly as it bears on the risk of human beings' developing coronary heart disease. Moore has reviewed the evidence in a very lucid manner.

He has raised serious doubts that the scientific underpinning for the National Cholesterol Education Program is as sound as is alleged, and has provided the American public with important information about the limited benefits that have been demonstrated thus far in improving health and reducing the risk of coronary heart disease. It has been calculated that lifelong reduction of serum-cholesterol levels in those with borderline cholesterol values has a negligible effect on both morbidity and mortality. In summary, I am an advocate of the strategies that identify people at genuinely high risk and help them to reduce their risk factors.

ROBERT E. OLSON, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
Professor of Pharmacology
State University of New York
at Stony Brook

Thomas J. Moore replies:

Strong objections were to be expected from the architects of a public-health intervention that I argued was a serious and expensive mistake. While I never doubted either their sincerity or their research experience, I turned to other sources for a more impartial assessment of the evidence.

I described every single National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute clinical trial of cholesterol reduction to prevent heart attacks. However, criticism centers on studies I "failed" to mention. This is particularly true on the question of diet.

For example, I did not mention the 1969 Veterans Administration trial because it used a diet that cannot be recommended today (high levels of polyunsaturated fats), because it was not conducted among free-living individuals, and because it did not achieve a statistically significant reduction in coronary heart disease. I did not mention the 1971 Finnish Mental Hospital Study because the population was not free-living and used an unsafe diet, and because critics and proponents

agreed that its design was fatally flawed. ("Astounding that it was even conceived, let alone conducted," one reviewer said.) I did not mention the more promising Oslo trial because it was too small, the participants were unlike us, and, once again, the diet was not comparable to that recommended in the United States. I also did not mention the most recently reported diet study, describing an experiment that ended twenty-one years earlier: Minnesota researchers achieved a 13 percent reduction in cholesterol in a group of several thousand mental-hospital patients fed a diet high in polyunsaturated fat, but the trial failed to prevent any heart attacks.

However, all four trials raise a point of interest: early experimenters did learn that diets high in polyunsaturated fat apparently lower serum-cholesterol levels by 10 to 15 percent. But because of fears about cancer and gallstones neither the American Heart Association nor the heart institute recommends such a diet today.

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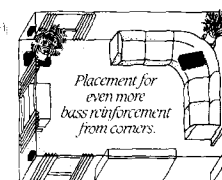
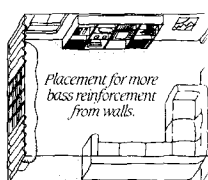
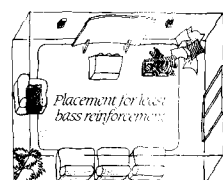
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much smaller reductions in cholesterol, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute representatives continue to claim that reductions of 10 to 20 percent are typical, and allege that diet will provide adequate results for most people. Since clinical trials also involving powerful cholesterol-lowering drugs achieved average reductions of only 8 to 10 percent, their claim remains a misleading overstatement of the weaker and more indirect effects of currently recommended diets.

We are left with three problems regarding the diet question. The diet that did demonstrably lower cholesterol probably isn't safe and may not prevent heart attacks. The diet that is now recommended is probably safe but doesn't lower cholesterol much. And little is known about the overall health effects of radical low-fat or vegetarian diets.

Mary E. Farkas makes the valid point, however, that typical cholesterol-lowering diets are generally healthful, and might reduce diabetes, obesity, and other health problems. (Low-fat, low-calorie diets are questionable only for pregnant women and children.) My concern is not with these diets but with placing 60 million Americans on them, on doctors' orders, with the promise that following them is likely to reduce substantially the risk of heart attack. To convert advice on healthful living into a costly program of medical therapy requires better scientific evidence of health benefits.

We have also heard much selective reporting about the Japanese and their low-fat diets and low heart-attack rates. But the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute spent millions of dollars studying men of Japanese descent in Hawaii, only to learn that heart attacks were just as frequent among those who had remained on the traditional Japanese diet—thus failing to confirm the results of a smaller study of migrants.

The National Cholesterol Education Program representatives seem to argue that scientists everywhere agree with them. This is hardly the case. For example, the Ontario Ministry of Health recently published an excellent review of the scientific literature on cholesterol which is similar to the findings of numerous other reviews in the medical journals and, except for its more tech-

nical language, to the analysis I presented. The Canadians have opted for a vastly more limited program. The British recently decided against recommending any cholesterol testing whatever. Even a paper by the European Atherosclerosis Society presented general and moderate advice, not a widespread program of medical intervention. So the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has led us into the largest, most aggressive, and most expensive medical-treatment program for high cholesterol in the world.

Critics take me to task for not mentioning the Cholesterol Lowering Atherosclerosis Study (CLAS), an interesting experiment that focused on eighty bypass-surgery patients whose cholesterol levels were reduced drastically (by more than 20 percent) with a combination of two powerful cholesterol-lowering drugs; it is likely, but not certain, that one out of six obstructions in the coronary arteries regressed, compared with none in a control group.

I did not mention the study because the question that it raises—What will happen with drastic changes in cholesterol levels?—was thoroughly explored in my discussion of the new drug lovastatin (or Mevacor). The central limitation of all cholesterol-lowering trials has been their lack of success in achieving significant reductions, and the prospect of making major changes in blood-cholesterol levels finally offers the means to obtain conclusive evidence. It should be a high priority to find out whether drastic cholesterol-level changes are helpful or harmful.

Two writers, John LaRosa and David Dodson, believe that the decline in coronary heart disease in America in the past twenty-five years may be linked to a reduction in the consumption of saturated fats. In the scientific literature are dozens of papers attempting to explain the remarkable decline in coronary heart disease. Every author uses many and different assumptions; each gets a different answer. The health status of the nation is tracked so carelessly and imprecisely that it is hard to reach any usable conclusions. But the National Center for Health Statistics, in the most thorough study of its type, found cholesterol levels in this country nearly unchanged over

two decades. Since cholesterol levels were unchanged, I concluded that either saturated fats are not as important as these two writers claim or saturated-fat intake could not have declined on the average. Neither possibility seemed likely to explain the dramatic drop in coronary heart disease, incidence of which is now more than 42 percent below the peak in 1963.

Daniel Steinberg challenges that "serious and fatal" side effects occur with cholesterol-lowering drugs, noting quite correctly that the drugs for which the worst side effects were documented—estrogen, clofibrate, and dextrothyroxine—are no longer in use. He misses the point. Those drugs were approved and were widely available before their dangers were revealed in long-term clinical trials. Nevertheless, lovastatin is available for use by millions without such trials, and if the cholesterol program succeeds in placing millions on cholesterol-lowering medication, new competitors will undoubtedly soon appear, having been studied no better or more completely. Although the government's cholesterol program does not now recommend lovastatin, Steinberg himself represented its manufacturer in approval proceedings before the Food and Drug Administration.

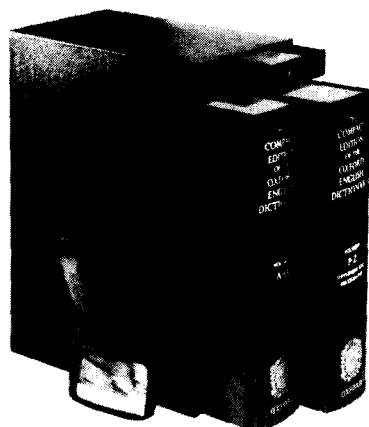
Moderate side effects are quite frequent with the more commonly used cholesterol-lowering drugs. More than nine out of ten people experienced side effects with niacin, and 68 percent with cholestyramine (or Questran). Lovastatin has much less frequent but more troubling side effects that include lens opacities (cataracts), insomnia, and damage to liver and muscle tissue. Its long-term side effects remain unknown.

My critics also contest the question of whether lowering cholesterol levels has saved lives. Is total mortality—or the ability to save lives—a reasonable test of cholesterol-lowering treatment? Since the clinical trials were conducted among specially selected subjects at such high risk of heart attack that 40 to 50 percent of their deaths could be expected to be attributable to coronary heart disease, it is sensible to expect evidence of lives saved if treatment is reasonably effective. Also, deaths can be measured simply and consistently in every trial, free of the complex and sometimes subjective judgments about

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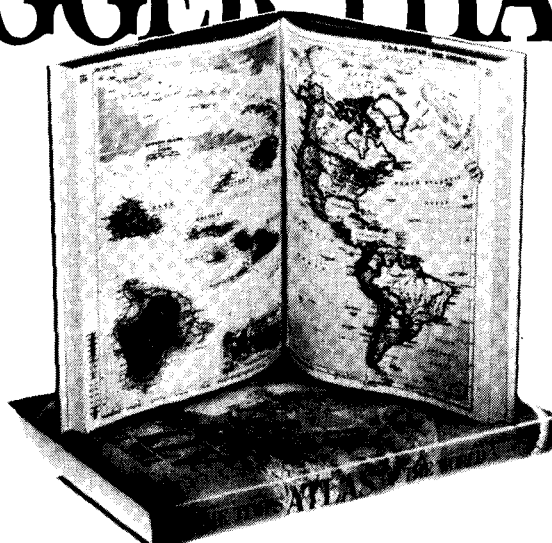
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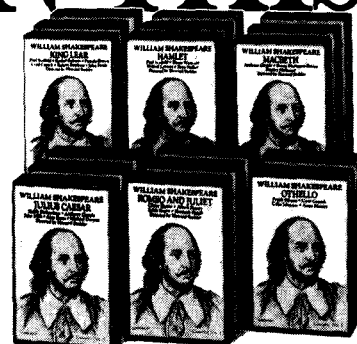
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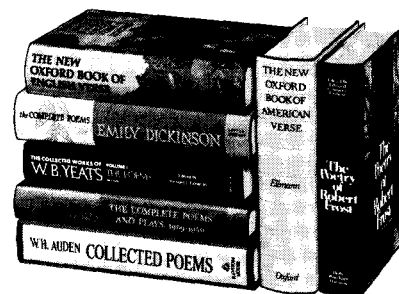


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what is or is not a heart attack. To argue that evidence of prolonged life may emerge only after observing thousands of people in both treatment and control groups for ten or twenty years is simply another way of saying that the life-prolonging effects of cholesterol-lowering treatments, if there are any, are small, and will benefit a tiny minority after decades of faithful adherence. Total mortality is also an important double check in drug trials, to guarantee that the treatment did not do more harm than good—as it in fact did in the trials of clofibrate, estrogen, and dextrothyroxine.

Given that tens of thousands of hand-picked, high-risk subjects were observed for years on end without any finding of an effect on total mortality, Steinberg nevertheless contends in his letter that the national program can expect to prevent one out of five heart-attack deaths. This is in direct contradiction to decades of clinical-trial experience.

Equally revealing is my critics' prime example of the saving of lives with drugs, the long-term follow-up to the five-year Coronary Drug Project trial of niacin and clofibrate in heart-attack victims. Ten years after the trial was abandoned as a failure, experimenters discovered that fewer deaths had occurred in the group that had taken niacin than in a control group, though no fewer had occurred in the group taking clofibrate. But what was the source of the health benefit? Taking the drug for five years, a period during which 92 percent of the people in the group experienced side effects and the group experienced no fewer deaths? Or not taking the drug for the next ten years?

Claude Lenfant correctly notes that I omitted evidence from animal experiments. Why focus on animal models when there have been so many well-conducted studies of living human beings? Furthermore, creating obstructions in the arteries of rabbits and rhesus monkeys—herbivores not biologically adapted to consuming animal products—provides only limited insight.

Lenfant fails to respond adequately to my concern about the poor performance of the nation's clinical laboratories in measuring cholesterol accurately. No one questions that cholesterol can be measured with acceptable accu-

racy, or that machines can be calibrated to a national reference sample. The problem is that Lenfant has no workable program to ensure accuracy and protect the patient and consumer who is the victim of poor laboratory work. Repeated measurements boost both costs and accuracy, but they cannot overcome the most common problem: systematic bias that results in readings consistently too high or too low.

James Fleet and Lenfant are incorrect in saying that the cholestyramine trial was statistically significant by normal standards. A one-tailed test is both inappropriate and "more lenient," meaning that a smaller difference between the treatment group and the control group will achieve statistical significance. Also, it is wrong to select one statistical test for a major experiment in advance, and then shop for a more lenient one when results fall short. A one-tailed test is particularly inappropriate in a clinical trial where there is a possibility that the treatment could cause harm as well as good. Fleet's example, comparing small differences in already proven treatments, is not applicable here. To quote a colleague and statistics professor: when the effect of treatment is so small that the debate centers on statistical significance, it is likely that the findings have no practical significance.

The National Cholesterol Education Program representatives also raise the question of a link between high cholesterol levels and coronary heart disease in women and the elderly, who I believe were swept into the treatment program in error. No clinical trials have ever been conducted among these groups, and the benefits of treatment, if any, will clearly be less than those experienced by young and middle-aged men. So widespread is the consensus in the scientific community that the cholesterol link is much weaker among these groups that I did not see any necessity for discussing it at length in my article. Since the article was written, a report from the U.S. Congressional Office of Technology Assessment has concluded that there is no evidence that cholesterol treatment of the elderly will prolong life. P. J. Palumbo, of the Mayo Clinic, argues in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* that no treatment benefits have been demonstrated in

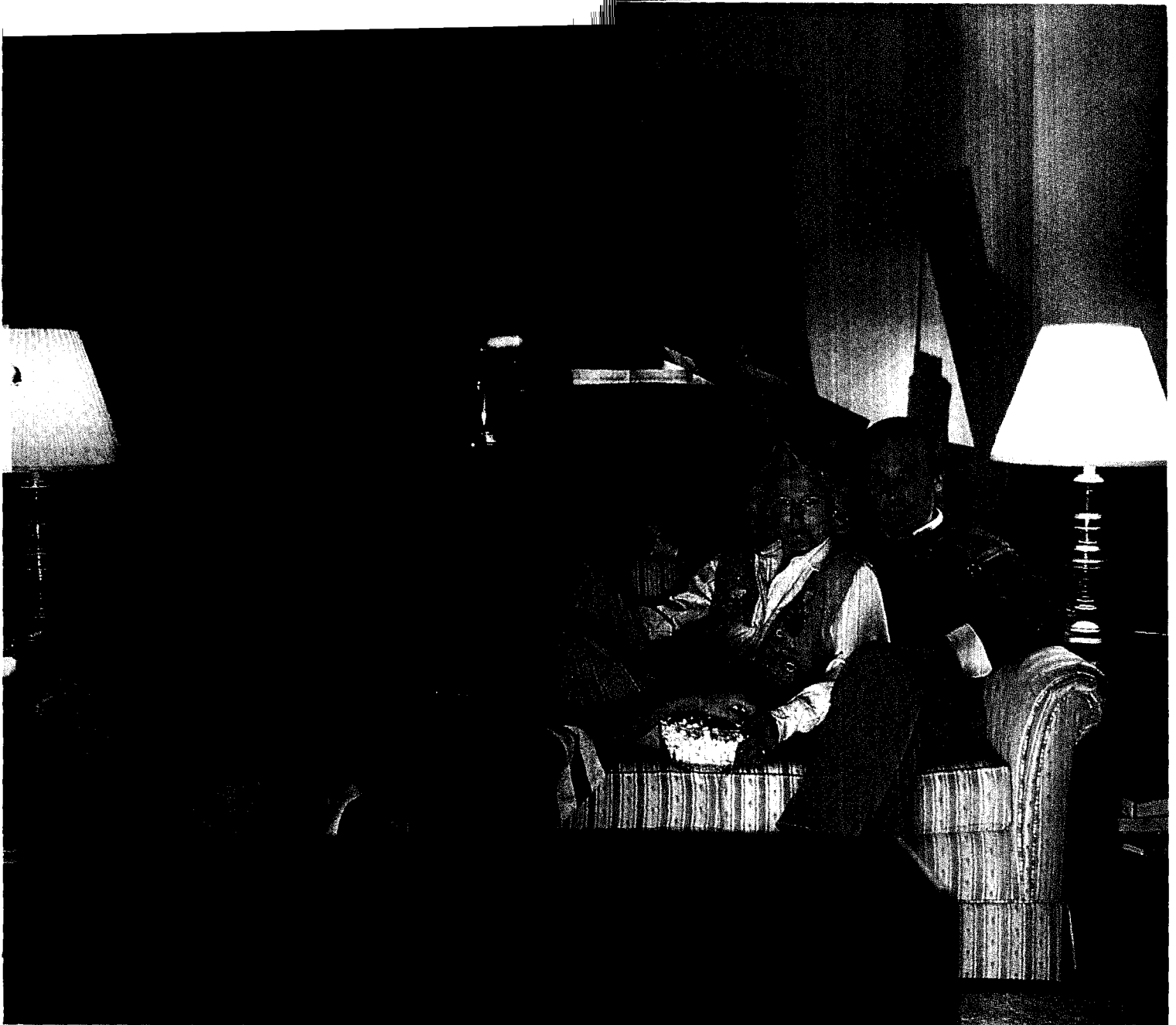
people over age sixty. Thomas N. James, a former president of the American Heart Association, describes cholesterol treatment of the elderly as "a national tragedy."

Peter Greenwald, of the National Cancer Institute, misrepresents my article on the relationship between low cholesterol levels and cancer. I do not "imply" that a causal relationship between low cholesterol and cancer has been "firmly established." I specifically identify it as a zone of great uncertainty, but I believe that we need more research to explain why the incidence of cancer, stroke, and gallstones increases steadily as cholesterol levels drop below 200 mg/dl.

George Blackburn contradicts himself. On the one hand, he concludes that clinical trials are so complex that only a committee of experts can interpret them (those who are familiar with anything designed by a committee may be doubtful). On the other hand, he quotes Richard Peto's one-man analysis, a radical view of cholesterol reduction that has never been published in a peer-reviewed journal and is so incomplete in detail that Peto has not even listed the specific clinical trials on which his conclusions depend.

Ellis Neufeld raises the valid point that the article neglects "the millions of people for whom cholesterol is indeed a health risk," those with cholesterol levels above 300 mg/dl. For this group, especially anyone under age sixty-five, benefits and risks may look dramatically different. The blame, however, probably lies with the architects of the National Cholesterol Education Program, who, in spreading their net so wide, take attention away from the minority most likely to benefit from treatment.

The question has never been whether a link exists between high blood cholesterol and an increased risk of a heart attack. The question has not been whether some individuals are at sufficient risk that they should choose medical treatment despite its limited efficacy. The question is whether the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has an adequate basis in scientific fact or public policy for launching a program to place 60 million Americans under medical treatment for their lifetimes at an annual cost of \$20 to \$40 billion.



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HEALTH & SAFETY

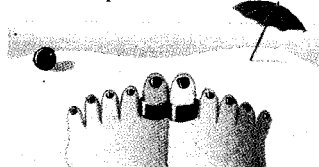
Perhaps because January is a month in which many Americans start a diet, it is also the month of choice for introducing diet books. This January's highlights will include *The New Pritikin Program*, a kinder, gentler version of the old program; *The Diet Bible*, which reveals Scripture to be a source not only of spiritual but also of physical well-being; a *Weight Watchers Meals in Minutes* cookbook; and the first-ever low-calorie cookbook from Betty Crocker. Also coming in January is *Jean Simpson's Numbers Diet*, by the well-known numerologist. "If you've had it with fad diets," Simpson writes, "read on."

THE SKIES

11, Full Moon, known this month as the Winter, Yule, or Wolf Moon. 26, New Moon; also on this day there is an annular eclipse of the Sun—visible, unfortunately, only from the Southern Hemisphere. Jupiter is the only planet visible in the evening skies all through the month, riding high in Gemini.

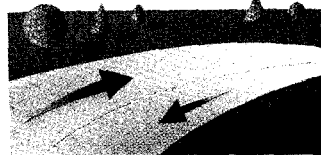
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ARTS & LETTERS

January 20, presentation of the Golden Globe awards, honoring the past year's best in movies and television. The Golden Globes are scrutinized for clues to the outcome of the Academy Awards balloting, in March. Also this month selected PBS stations will begin providing descriptive narration to television shows such as *American Playhouse* and *Mystery!* to benefit the blind and the visually impaired. In an analogue to closed captioning for the deaf, which is now widespread, narrators on a special audio program channel will describe action, settings, and body language during musical interludes or breaks in the dialogue. The American Foundation for the Blind estimates that some 2 to 3 million people in the United States suffer from severe visual impairment, and in all probability the number will rise dramatically as the Baby Boom generation continues its tiresome trek through the life cycle.



Q & A

Why do people in certain countries drive on the left, while those in other countries drive on the right? This is one of those questions that defy a tidy answer. One theory traces driving on the left (the way it's done in India, Australia, Japan, and the British Isles) back to England's knights in armor, who are believed to have ridden on the left so as to have their lances (carried on the right) at the ready. Such considerations presumably mattered little in places like the New World. However right-side travel got started, it has had powerful proponents. Napoleon insisted on it in his domains, and Hitler less than gently persuaded Czechoslovakia of its merits.

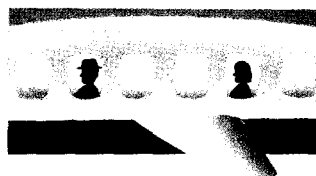


ENVIRONMENT

This is a month of no little activity for some of the best-known hibernators of the frozen north woods: bear cubs are usually born in January. Mother bears wake up to give birth and then become torpid again. They continue lactating, however, and the cubs, which weigh less than a pound at birth, will weigh up to eight pounds by spring. The adults will have lost about a quarter of their body weight by then, much of it burned-off fat; their cholesterol levels, as a result, are twice as high in winter as in summer. Their bile juice contains ursodeoxycholic acid, which makes cholesterol more soluble and may account for the absence of ursine arteriosclerosis and gallstones. Ursodeoxycholic acid is used clinically to treat gallstones in human beings; here it is derived from slaughterhouse by-products, not bears.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In January the U.S. airline industry enters the doldrums, with fewer Americans making foreign or domestic flights and fewer foreigners visiting the United States than at any other time. In terms of elbow room, it's a good time to fly: the average plane in January is only about half full. Because each pound added to an airplane's weight requires some 15 extra gallons of fuel a year, those half-full planes will at least be saving energy; the savings in money is not nearly enough, however, to offset the loss of passenger revenue.



GOVERNMENT

January 1, the Outer Continental Shelf Leasing and Development Task Force will release its report on sales of oil and gas-drilling rights off California and Florida. President Bush, because of stiff opposition, delayed the sales last February, pending an environmental review. Also by this date American farmers must have had a plan approved by the Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service for the control of erosion on any highly erodible land on their property. Farmers who are not in compliance will become ineligible for government loans and price supports. Conservation methods include farming across slopes rather than up and down them, leaving old crop residue in place to hold the soil, and terracing.



50 YEARS AGO

Henry W. Holmes, writing about public education in the January, 1940, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "No public institution struggles with a set of problems more complex, more difficult, nearer to the pulse of life, more fateful for the order and the onward movement of American civilization, than those the public schools must face. Can anyone imagine what would happen if they closed their doors to one school generation? Is it not easy to imagine what would happen if they were better understood, better supported, better staffed? What if teaching and school management should come to be looked upon as a profession, not less to be protected from the unqualified nor less to be rewarded and conditioned to the highest possible performance than the priesthood, law, or medicine?"



VODKA DRINKERS DEFECT TO RUM.

If we flat-out claimed that rum and tonic makes a better drink than vodka and tonic, you'd think we were biased.

Which is why we commissioned a "blind" taste test among vodka and tonic drinkers.

We asked them to choose between the best selling vodka and a selection of rums from Puerto Rico.

Each was mixed with tonic. But did that make things truly equal? Ours, after all, was a less familiar taste. Theirs was a tradition.

Yet, fully 47% — almost *half* — preferred rum and tonic to the tried-and-true vodka and tonic.

We assume that's because the rums of Puerto Rico, which are aged by law for one year, have a warmer, more alive character than vodka.

What else could explain such a defection?



RUMS
OF
PUERTO
RICO

REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

That's Life

An obscure newsletter is devoted to stories that are strange but true

HOW MUCH FAT do people have liposuctioned in a year? You missed that story, I'll bet, in your hurry to get to the business and political news. Did you follow the case of the Oklahoma City man charged with armed robbery who served as his own lawyer? When his alleged victim identified him from the witness stand, he jumped to his feet and shouted, "I should have blown your . . . head off," and then added, after the briefest of pauses, "if I'd been the one that was there."

Imagine a newsletter consisting entirely of the stupid stories you read to your spouse over breakfast. It's here. Even better, it's free, a labor of demented love on the part of one Chuck Shepherd, a professor at George Washington University's School of Government and Business Administration.

Read about the man who tried to commit suicide by eating rancid chicken; read about the four Harvard Medical School graduates on a camping trip who set 400 acres of national forest afire because they thought burning used toilet paper would be more ecologically sound than burying it; read about Iraq's decision to sell tanks to Iran while the two countries were at war.

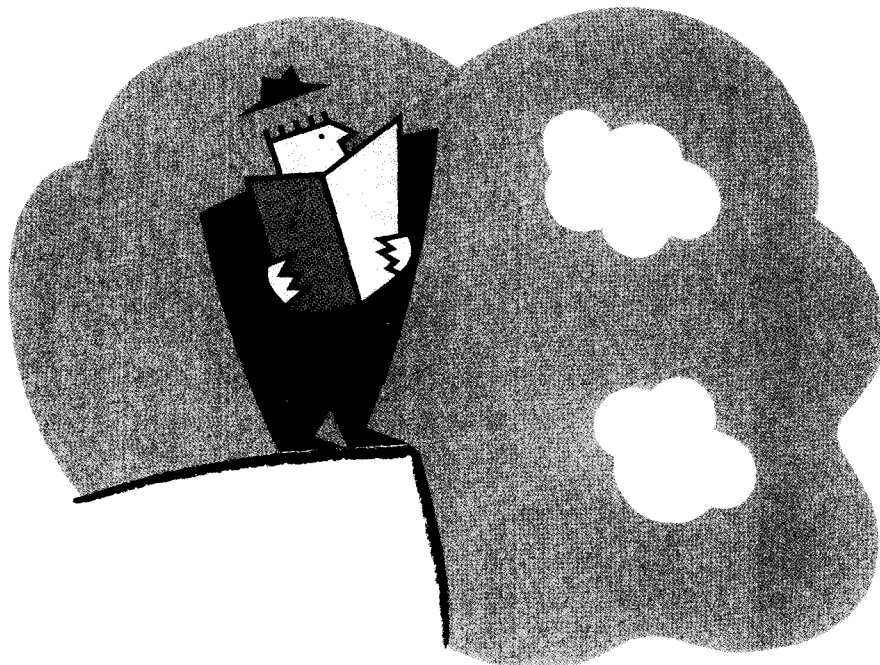
Welcome to *View from the Ledge*, now beginning its tenth year. It is, Shepherd says, "a celebration of the sub-mainstream," and Shepherd has exacting standards. "It's not available at any

price," he explains. "The only way to get on the mailing list is to send me clippings." Each issue of *View from the Ledge* costs Shepherd about \$250, mostly for postage, and he returns about \$20 a month to people who don't know the rules and send along a dollar or two with a request for the next issue.

Not just any clippings will do. Nothing from a supermarket tabloid, for example—only stories from legitimate news sources qualify. Shepherd points out, with gravity befitting a dealer in Picassos and Pollocks, that his newsletter is "for the serious collector." His current mailing list totals about 400, all people who regularly contribute clippings. Shepherd estimates that about 2,000 people have received *View from the Ledge* at one time or another. "A lot of people are probationary," he says. "They've sent things once or twice, and if they send one or two more, I'll put them on the permanent list."

Shepherd began working on *View from the Ledge* in 1980, mailing the first issue to his friends in January of 1981. It took hold slowly, like a particularly insidious virus. "As late as early 1988," Shepherd recalls, "only fifty people who weren't friends or friends of friends were on the mailing list." At around that point a handful of "alternative" newspapers began running snippets from the newsletter, and Shepherd's mail increased. Now he has a contract with a mainstream syndicate and a book deal.

Shepherd spends most of his time teaching law and regulation to business students. He is tall and thin, with a deep voice and an authoritative manner. Few of his colleagues know of his pastime, and listening to him happily discourse on legal history, it is hard to picture him publishing a newsletter that proclaims, "You're only young once, but you can *always* be immature."





ADVICE AND DISSENT

They offer counsel and comment on the week's events from Washington. They do it with wit and dissension. They're The McLaughlin Group.

The Group comprises (clockwise from left) Jack Germond, Eleanor Clift, John McLaughlin, Fred Barnes, Morton Kondracke and Pat Buchanan.

They're contentious and contagious. So, tune in to The McLaughlin Group.

Made possible by a grant from GE.

THE McLAUGHLIN GROUP

(check your local listing for station and time.)



We bring good things to life.

Shepherd, who is forty-four, is doing nicely at fending off maturity. But he is hardly casual about *View from the Ledge*. He prepares his oddball newsletter with all the zeal of a crusading editor. "The point," he says, "is that all the stories are true. I've never been much interested in things that are made up. But true stories reveal a lot about society and human nature. It's amateur anthropology."

Shepherd interrupts himself, in panic. "Does that sound ridiculously pompous?" One of the regular *View from the Ledge* features is a collection of celebrity inanities, and Shepherd is afraid of saying something that would be appropriate to his own pages—like the remark from Christopher Atkins, the actor, "It's nice to be beautiful, but it's beautiful to be nice."

Shepherd prefers that stories be "funny or ironic or weird." And, of course, true. In Shepherd's hands, a reverence for truth combined with an irreverence for everything else makes for an exceedingly odd mix. "If something is genuinely strange," he says, "you don't need to add a thing. You just put in enough information so the reader can admire its authenticity." Take the marital history of Hal Warden, who divorced his second wife at sixteen. He had married his first wife, Wendy, when he was twelve and she was fourteen. Wendy had won custody of their child by convincing the judge that "Hal was acting like a ten-year-old."

IN STRUCTURE, *View from the Ledge* relies more or less on the familiar news categories. Most stories can be pigeonholed as national or international politics, sports, medicine, or business. But the material grouped under those headings is different. Long before Robert Bork's name was well known, for example, Bork had surfaced in *View from the Ledge*. "The Civil Rights Act routinely has been interpreted to prohibit sexual 'harassment' of employees," Shepherd wrote in 1985, "but Judge Robert Bork of the US Court of Appeals . . . now reports that his court says only such harassment by heterosexuals and homosexuals is covered—but not that by bisexual employers, who in theory do not 'discriminate' among their targets on the basis of gender."

Business news comes under the

heading "The Entrepreneurial Spirit." Do you know which college to attend to major in "mall management"? That a Japanese firm offers a Dial-a-Flattery service to people with low self-esteem?

Crime gets close coverage too. Shepherd seems especially fond of ineffectual bad guys. One recent item was about a would-be purse snatcher who was ward off by a victim armed with a hot fudge sundae, another about three drug dealers who were arrested after a couple told police they had heard a drug transaction on the intercom in their baby's bedroom. Police arrived in time to overhear the dealers order a pizza and give their home address. One United Press story ran with the understated headline "THEFT OF ENTIRE HOUSE LEAVES POLICE PUZZLED." "The white stucco house was discovered missing by termite inspectors who had been sent by the owner to check the structure."

Shepherd even publishes public-service announcements, of a sort. Want to know where to write to join Cat Lovers Against the Bomb? How about information on the nation's first canine sperm bank?

In contrast to the tabloids, *View from the Ledge* doesn't bother too much with the rich and famous, though a celebrity occasionally scampers across its pages. Brooke Shields once explained why smoking is a bad idea: "Smoking can kill you, and if you've been killed, you've lost a very important part of your life." But the characteristic *View from the Ledge* story is a tiny snippet about unknown people. Themes gradually emerge from this pointillist approach.

Like the rest of us, Shepherd knows that people occasionally leave money to their pets. Unlike the rest of us, he knows that cats receive the most legacies from their owners, with dogs second and birds third. He knows which politicians are elected posthumously and runs an occasional roundup called "Latest Victorious Dead Candidates." He not only remembers, in detail, the story of the Virginia man who explained that he had shot his mother-in-law because he mistook her for a raccoon but also knows that deer, dogs, and woodchucks have been blamed for similar attacks.

Shepherd has an odd sense of humor, but he is not campy, not self-consciously cute à la David Letterman.

His favorite stories are not about misfits but about "people who are completely normal—they have things they're interested in." They just have one tiny quirk.

Take the maintenance man in Stockholm, for example, who operated a moving sidewalk until he was charged with assault on 632 people. Furious that some people thought walking was faster than his ride, he sped the sidewalk up to more than fifty miles an hour, dashing hapless riders against a nearby wall.

Every day's mail brings Shepherd similar tales. He gets some two dozen letters daily, from all over the country, many on corporate stationery or with business cards attached. On the day I visited, the best was a newspaper headline: "WIFE'S BODY BURIED IN CALIFORNIA DESSERT." Clippings come from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, from *American Cemetery Magazine* and *The New England Journal of Medicine*. "The *San Francisco Chronicle* is the bible for weird stuff," Shepherd says, "and the *Miami Herald* is notorious too."

Shepherd prefers obscure sources. He is convinced that trade journals contain a treasure trove of eccentric tales, if only he could tap their riches. "I'm always trying to find newsletters that cover things I don't know anything about. Somebody at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission must keep a file on safety violations, for instance. I'd love to find that person." As if in answer to his hopes, a tax specialist sent Shepherd an accountants' newsletter containing a sober analysis of Spiro Agnew's tax quandaries. Agnew, who is repaying to the State of Maryland bribes he was accused of taking while governor, wanted to list the repayments on his California income-tax return as a deductible expense.

EVERY FEW MONTHS Shepherd gathers the best sixty or so submissions, tapes them or paraphrases of them to a sheet of cardboard, and runs off several hundred photocopies, which he folds into four-page newsletters. (Shepherd, a lawyer, announced in his first issue, "Copyright information: VFTL stole all this stuff from other people.") He is editor, publisher, and circulation department, and he can't even claim he didn't know what he was getting into. Before coming to



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TO HER LIFE.
NOW IT'S ADDING LIFE
TO HER YEARS.



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At Allied-Signal, we believe living longer isn't enough. That's why we've awarded more than \$3 million to organizations and individuals dedicated to improving the quality of life for older Americans.

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Professor Edward J. Masoro, University of Texas Health Science Center, for achievements in bio-medical research; and
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Send in t

There's a good reason why more cars are looking more and more alike. It's called the Accord.

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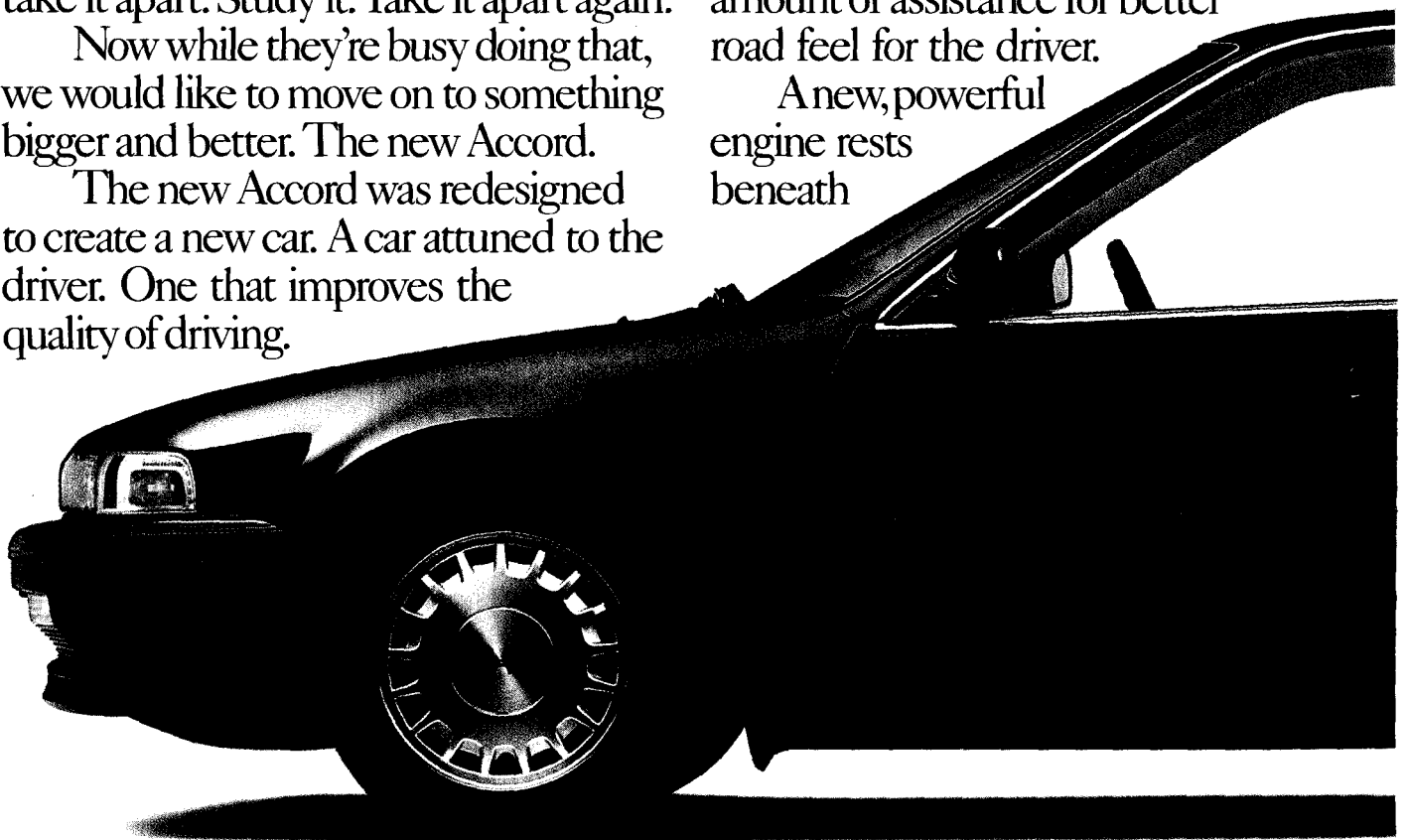
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The new Accord was redesigned to create a new car. A car attuned to the driver. One that improves the quality of driving.

panels. So it's stiffer and more solid. The redesigned 4-wheel double wishbone suspension system works even better.

Power steering now operates at all speeds. And it progressively adjusts the amount of assistance for better road feel for the driver.

A new, powerful engine rests beneath



There is more room inside, the ride is more comfortable and the car is more responsive under all driving conditions.

You can see the smooth, flowing lines and the substantial increase in glass area. But the greater refinements are inside the car, where they matter most.

The body is built with thicker steel

the low, sloping hood. It's fuel injected. Unique balance shafts cancel inertial forces that cause other engines to twist and shake. You'll be amazed at just how smoothly and quietly it runs.

There is a new 4-speed automatic transmission available that's compact, smooth shifting and even more efficient.

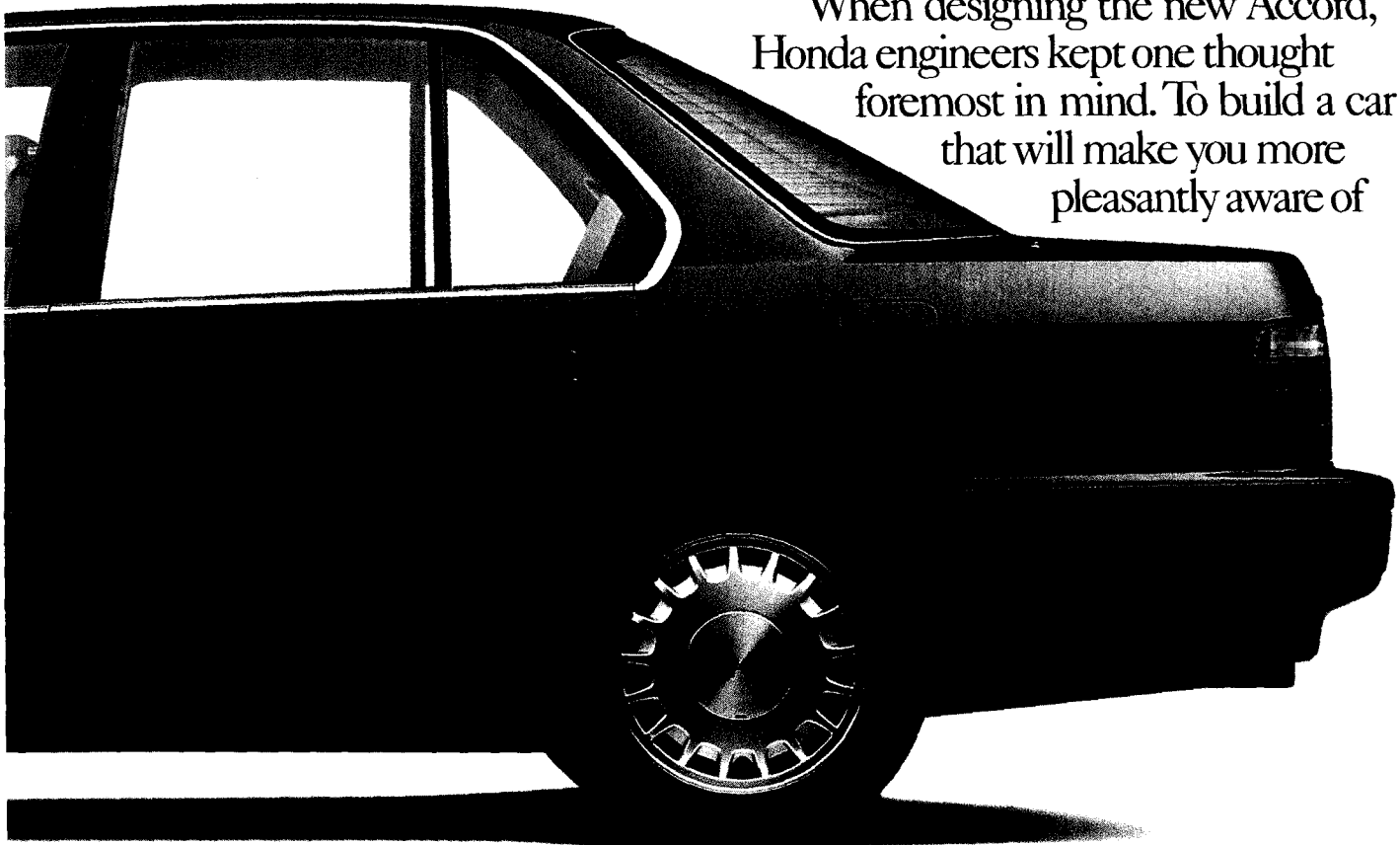
he clones.

Once seated inside the car, you are welcomed by a bright, airy environment that immediately puts you at ease. The controls and instruments are logically placed. Everything falls into your line of

is thick and plush and helps to absorb noise and vibrations.

A new ventilation system further assures your comfort. It's quiet, efficient and the controls are easy to use.

When designing the new Accord, Honda engineers kept one thought foremost in mind. To build a car that will make you more pleasantly aware of



sight and is easily within your reach.

The front seats are larger and offer greater support. Rear seats contour to your shape for better comfort.

The interior is designed to give the appearance of smooth, seamless space. Panels are moulded from one piece so there is nothing to rattle. The carpeting

the enjoyment of driving. You will have to drive it to believe it.

And you should keep this in mind. If you are thinking about buying a new Accord, make sure it's the one built by Honda.

HONDA

The New Accord

the business school, Shepherd spent several years putting out newsletters, one for a group concerned with public-access television and one about the Federal Communications Commission.

After nine years and thirty issues of *View from the Ledge*, Shepherd still feels fresh. "There's just so much we don't know," he says.

Consider Clint Bolin. "Bolin," Shepherd explains, "is a gentleman from Long Beach, California, who checked out of the rooming house he had occupied for a month, leaving be-

hind box after box filled with rocks and concrete, from floor to ceiling, packed solid except for small passageways from door to bed to bathroom. Investigators found the same thing at the two previous rooming houses where he had stayed."

Oh, yes: more than 100,000 people had a total of twenty-five tons of fat liposuctioned in 1987. For more vital information, send news clippings to Chuck Shepherd, P.O. Box 57141, Washington, D.C. 20037.

—Edward Dolnick



On an electronic display screen, a war game gets under way

THE MILITARY

Conventional Warfare

Third World conflicts and the lessons of Vietnam are entering the curriculum of the Army War College, but the focus is still on Europe

THESE ARE unsettling times for the U.S. armed forces. The basic presumptions of the postwar period—the menace of the Soviet Union, the bifurcation of Europe, the nuclear deterrent, the role of NATO—have come under challenge. More and more, the military is being called on to perform unfamiliar tasks, from protecting Persian Gulf oil lanes and battling

Colombian drug traffickers to subduing Qaddafi and helping remove Noriega. The military is on the brink of a new era, one that will be marked by declining budgets, reduced forces, and changing missions. How will the armed forces adapt?

To find out, I paid a visit to the Army War College, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The college serves as a sort of graduate school in war-making. Every year many of the army's top men and women come to be groomed for senior leadership. Most of the students will go on to be full colonels; those who excel will rise to general. For several days I became a student at the war college. I attended lectures, pored over assigned readings, and participated in seminar discussions. I chatted with students in the hallways, joined them on the softball field, took breakfast with them in the morning, and downed beers with them at night. I stayed on campus, in a

century-old guesthouse named after George Washington. The college officials asked only that I not quote any student by name.

The navy and the air force also have their own war colleges. Two other institutions, the National War College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, offer instruction to members of all the services. But the army is the largest branch of the armed forces, and the Army War College is worthy of special attention. Most of our top army generals, from Dwight Eisenhower and George Patton to Matthew Ridgway and Maxwell Taylor, attended the war college. What's more, the college is in the midst of an ambitious five-year plan designed to prepare it for the twenty-first century.

There's a problem, though. The war college, like the army as a whole, suffers from institutional inertia. As a result, efforts to update the school's curriculum have flagged. In particular, the college is having difficulty anticipating the nature of future conflicts and absorbing the lessons of past ones—especially Vietnam.

CARLISLE BARRACKS, as the war-college campus is called, does not look like a typical military post. The central academic building, Root Hall, is a squat, functional structure that recalls innumerable junior colleges across the country. (It's named after Elihu Root, the former Secretary of War, who founded the college in 1901.) There are stately brick houses for faculty members and quaint matchbox houses for students and their families. Most impressive are the athletic facilities—several tennis courts, two softball fields, basketball and racquetball courts, even an eighteen-hole golf course. Oddly enough, the one statue I saw on campus was of Frederick the Great, a gift from Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Most students are lieutenant colonels in their early forties, and in their twentieth year of service. The experience that binds them is Vietnam—almost everyone served there. Otherwise, the class's 288 members are a diverse group. In addition to army officers, there are representatives from the navy, Marines, air force, and Coast Guard, as part of a "jointness" effort to promote better coordination within the armed services; civilians from the CIA, the National Security Agency, the For-



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Victor Theodor Engwall was seized by an obsession: to produce the world's most superb cup of coffee.

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They say one chilly day King Gustav V stopped in Gävle and tasted it. So enchanted

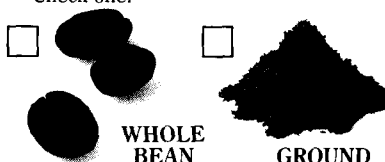
was he that he appointed Gevalia coffee purveyors to His Majesty and the Royal Court of Sweden.

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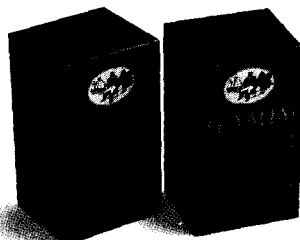


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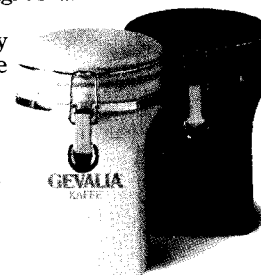
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eign Service, and other government agencies; and thirty-four "international fellows," from countries ranging from Tunisia to Thailand. Only eleven of the students, or 3.8 percent, are black, and six, or 2.1 percent, are women; 10.6 percent of army officers are black, and 11.1 percent are women. Three quarters of the students hold graduate degrees. In today's army it's hard to reach the senior ranks without one.

I was assigned to Seminar 10, one of the eighteen groups into which the student body is divided. We met in a windowless, brightly lit classroom whose walls were covered with maps. Dominating the room was a rectangular table around which sat the seminar's sixteen members. They included an army infantryman, a navy pilot, an air force paratrooper, an employee of the Defense Intelligence Agency, a National Guardsman, an army nurse, a lieutenant colonel from Puerto Rico, and officers from Venezuela and Somalia. The instructor was Colonel Curt Esposito, who, despite tours at West Point, in Vietnam, and at NATO headquarters, managed to bring a boyish enthusiasm to his work.

The students tended to be tight-lipped about the details of their pasts, but from occasional clues I could tell that these were not your everyday officers. Several had worked in Special Operations, the undercover unit that has been active in everything from fighting terrorism to training anti-Marxist guerrillas. Some had been involved in the infamous Phoenix program in Vietnam, which liquidated thousands of Vietcong cadres. One student told me about his role in planning the invasion of Grenada, another about helping to fly Duvalier out of Haiti.

Clearly, these officers had the right stuff, and for this they had been selected to move up the chain of command. They were about to enter a world requiring a broader field of vision. Is it possible to fight a limited nuclear war? What is the Red Army's strategy for fighting in Central Europe? How to distinguish among the various factions in the countries of the Middle East? This, then, was the primary mission of the college: to familiarize these soldiers with the larger issues associated with the military vocation.

The academic year at the war college is divided into six blocks, four of

them a core program and the other two periods during which students can choose from a variety of courses. At the time of my visit students were examining the roles and responsibilities of "The Senior Leader." Discussion topics included "The Human Dimension in Combat," "Professionalism and Ethics," and "Challenges of Senior Command During War." Students were assigned to read Samuel Huntington on the military mind, John Keegan on the face of battle, and essays on Rommel, "just" wars, and the loneliness of command. Each student was required to pick a famous general from history and write a 750-word essay on what made him great.

To my surprise, the students were subjected to a fair amount of psychobabble. Among the objectives listed in the course catalogue is to "clarify personal and professional goals through reassessment of personal values, strengths, and leadership competencies." Students are required to take a battery of tests intended to detect their personality types and heighten their self-awareness. It took a while to get used to hearing these gruff officers talk about personal growth, self-discovery, and "structural judgmental" types.

I was equally struck by the school's relaxed atmosphere. Students are not graded, and it's almost impossible to flunk out. In contrast to the rigors of the Naval War College, where the work load compares to that of a graduate school, the required reading at Carlisle is kept to a minimum; I found I could complete each night's assignment in less than an hour. Classes last only a few hours a day, and even that time is broken up with generous coffee breaks. All of this leaves students plenty of time to take advantage of the college's athletic facilities. One afternoon I played outfield for Seminar 10's softball team, part of a tune-up for the college's fall league. With golf buffs lugging their clubs to get in a few holes before dark, the war college occasionally takes on the air of a country club.

"We don't want to impose too heavy requirements on the students," said Howard Graves, a Rhodes scholar, master parachutist, and rising military star who until last June was the commandant of the college; he is now the assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For one thing, he said, the students need time with their fami-

lies. "If an officer's been leading a battalion in Germany and hasn't talked to his wife in two years, we want to leave time for that." More generally, he said, "we concentrate on the student as a total being—personal, professional, family man, and leader. This has to be a year of opportunity for renewal."

While keeping the school's pace relaxed, Graves and his successor, Major General Paul Cerjan, have sought to sharpen its curriculum. It is here that the war college faces its most important test. During the 1970s and early 1980s the curriculum became mired in all kinds of peripheral subjects. Budgeting, procurement, resource management, systems analysis—officers were being prepared less for commanding troops than for working a desk. Critics wondered what had become of the "war" in the war college.

But today the great emphasis at Carlisle is on "war-fighting." Students read a lot of military history. They engage in frequent war games. They learn how to meld the various services under a joint command. And they delve deeply into the work of Clausewitz, the nineteenth-century Prussian strategist whose observations on the nature of war seem as relevant today as they were when he wrote them.

Students also learn about the "operational art" of war. The term, much in vogue at the war college these days, refers to the large-scale battlefield operations required in theater warfare. Becoming adept in this area requires mastery of all those elements associated with leading an army into battle—command structure, intelligence, technology, mobility, even climate and terrain. To help teach them, the college offers an advanced course on the great battles of the Second World War. Students learn how Douglas MacArthur island-hopped across the Pacific, how the Russians stopped Adolf Hitler's tanks at Kursk, how the Allies repelled the Wehrmacht in the Ardennes.

Clearly, the war college is preparing its students for another conflict like the Second World War. If Warsaw Pact troops come pouring through the Fulda Gap into West Germany, or if the Soviets send their armored divisions speeding toward Brussels, then our future generals will know how to respond. The college sees the world primarily in East-West

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terms. Europe is the main theater, NATO the chief ally, the Soviet Union the principal threat.

"The central focus at the war college is still on Europe—and with good reason," says Rod Paschall, a colonel who recently retired as the director of the college's Military History Institute, which houses more than 250,000 volumes. "Europe is the home of Western civilization. A war there can destroy that civilization." Paschall, a graduate of West Point, George Washington, and Duke, says that if Gorbachev significantly reduced the size of the Soviet army, the war college could turn its attention to other matters. But he is not optimistic. "As long as the Warsaw Pact continues to mass a huge force in Europe," Paschall says, "it's important that we prepare our future leadership to deal with it. If we lose sight of that, we're in deep trouble."

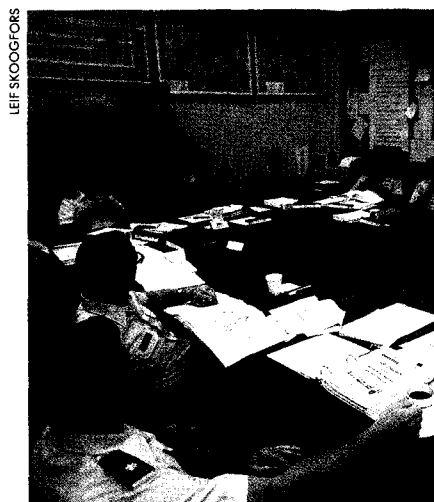
Some, however, believe that the war college is preparing its students to fight the wrong war. One afternoon I met Colonel Harold Nelson for lunch at the college's officers' club. Wry and erudite—he holds a Ph.D. in Russian history—Nelson taught at the college for seven years before being named last summer as the army's chief of military history, in Washington, D.C. "We take a lot of things as if they're given—for instance, that there's always going to be a Soviet threat," Nelson says. "But experience teaches us that this is not so, not so at all." He observes that there's a lot of "healthy skepticism" about the school's focus on Europe, especially now that superpower relations are warming up.

Nelson predicts that the army will shrink significantly in coming years, setting off a series of structural changes. Unfortunately, he says, the school seems uninterested in exploring the matter, despite the likelihood of large cuts in the military budget in the next few years. "The war college is not different from any other corporate body," he says. "There's a party line." He adds, "We should be thinking about what the army is going to look like in the twenty-first century. If the Soviet threat does begin to fade, what are we going to teach in these damned schools?"

Unconventional warfare, perhaps. Over the past twenty-five years, while Europe has remained quiet, U.S. forces have been dispatched to Indochina, the Dominican Republic, Leba-

non, Grenada, Honduras, and the Persian Gulf. From the contras in Nicaragua to the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, from Angola's UNITA to Peru's Shining Path, war today is usually waged by peasant armies operating in remote jungles and mountains. "Low-intensity conflict," the Pentagon calls it. In deference to this reality, the war college has added some faculty members with expertise in guerrilla warfare. Last year, for instance, a former head of the U.S. military group in El Salvador taught a course on revolution in Central America.

Beyond this, however, the college's offerings on Third World insurgencies are slim. "The war college is not yet where it should be on low-intensity conflict," General Graves told me.



Seminars and scenarios

"This has to be a major area of emphasis, because this kind of conflict has a much higher probability of occurring than any other. But we still have a long way to go." Since we spoke, the college has increased course offerings on the subject.

Most telling, perhaps, is the school's soft-pedaling of the political dimensions of military conflict. To be successful, contemporary officers must know not only about tank maneuvers and joint operations but also about agrarian reform and deforestation, human rights and international debt. Every year students travel to the United Nations, in New York, to talk with representatives from Third World nations, but this hardly familiarizes them with the intricate issues that they would likely face if posted to a distant land. Until senior officers understand the so-

cial roots of military conflict, they cannot hope to resolve it. This, in fact, is the primary lesson of Clausewitz, who wrote that war is an extension of political conflict. Apparently, this notion hasn't yet pervaded the war college's consciousness where the Third World is concerned.

THE REASON, I THINK, has much to do with Vietnam. For many years the school neglected that war. "There was a reluctance to look at Vietnam during the 1970s," says Colonel Don Lunday, the director of academic affairs. It was simply too emotional an issue, he explains. Today officers are willing to look more analytically at the war, thanks in part to Colonel Harry Summers's widely publicized book *On Strategy* (1982). Warning against the tendency to look for scapegoats, it notes our failure to recognize our true objectives in Vietnam and to devise a strategy for attaining them. The book, which was researched and written at the war college, has left an imprint. "Now we're waking up to the fact that there are some lessons to be learned from Vietnam," Lunday observes. Last year, for the first time, the school offered an elective course on Vietnam, and the core curriculum currently devotes two days to the war and its implications.

Still, this gives short shrift to the conflict. The Vietnam War would seem an ideal case study for examining the various dimensions of Third World conflict—guerrilla warfare, nationalism, radical ideology, class strife, revolution itself. Before we become involved in another peasant war, we need to understand why our many rural programs in Vietnam, from pacification to Phoenix, failed to win the hearts and minds of the local population.

During my stay at the war college, though, I found numerous indications that the army has yet to face up to its experience in Vietnam. One of the most revealing moments came during a classroom discussion of the My Lai massacre. I had been impressed to find the event in the college's syllabus. My Lai is one of the blackest marks on the history of the American military, yet here was Seminar 10 spending an afternoon examining why it had occurred and how such events might be averted in the future.

Remarkably, the material was new

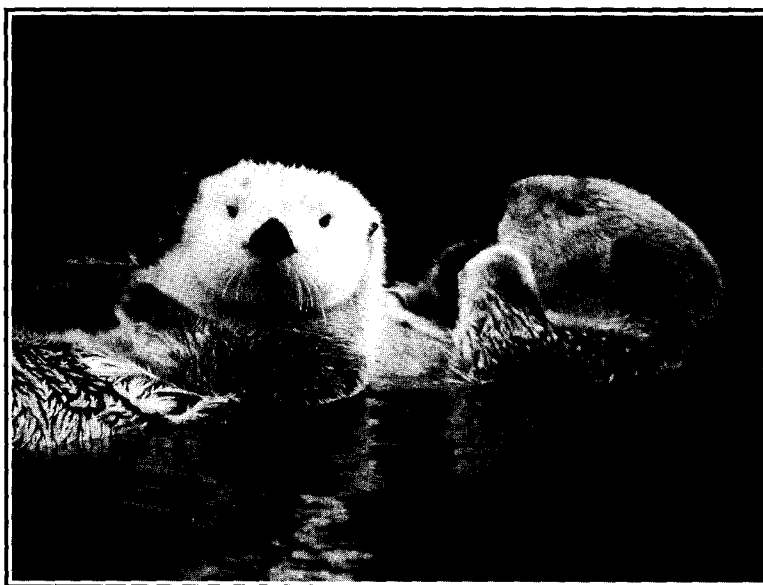
to members of the class. The murder of old men, women, and children; the destruction of villages; the cover-up—most of the students seemed to be hearing the details for the first time. During the discussion an air force colonel told the class that he had become so engrossed in the army's report on the incident that he had stayed up half the night reading it. "Until I read this," he declared, "I believed that My Lai was a tactic used by liberal anti-war people to demean the people who fought in Vietnam. It was a real shock to pick this up." All around the table officers nodded in agreement.

Near the end of the discussion I was asked to give my own impressions. I told the class how surprised I was to find that My Lai—an event that has been so exhaustively chronicled and debated—would come as a revelation to those veterans of the war. Esposito, who had served two and a half years in Vietnam, tried to explain: "When I came back from Vietnam, I just couldn't focus on the war. When the media dealt with Vietnam, I tuned it out. My Lai? I didn't want to be bothered with it. Only now am I getting to the point where I'm willing to go back and look more objectively at the war. I think that's true for a lot of the people who were in Vietnam."

On my last morning at the war college I attended a prayer breakfast at the campus chapel. About forty students showed up for eggs, cereal, and spiritual guidance. We sang "Happy Birthday" for one officer and prayed for the health of ailing friends and relatives. Then a uniformed colonel stepped up to the lectern to talk about ethics. In a soft voice he apologized for recounting a war story—something frowned on at the college—but said that he wanted to share an episode that had affected him deeply. In 1965 his commanding officer ordered him to inflate a body-count report. Though shocked, he complied. He falsified reports for the next three weeks, until he was wounded and evacuated from the country.

For many years, the colonel said, the event weighed on him. Wanting to make amends, he resolved never to repeat such an act nor to give similar orders to a subordinate. Nonetheless, "the burden stayed with me for years," he said. Only when he turned to religion did he find a way out: "I realized

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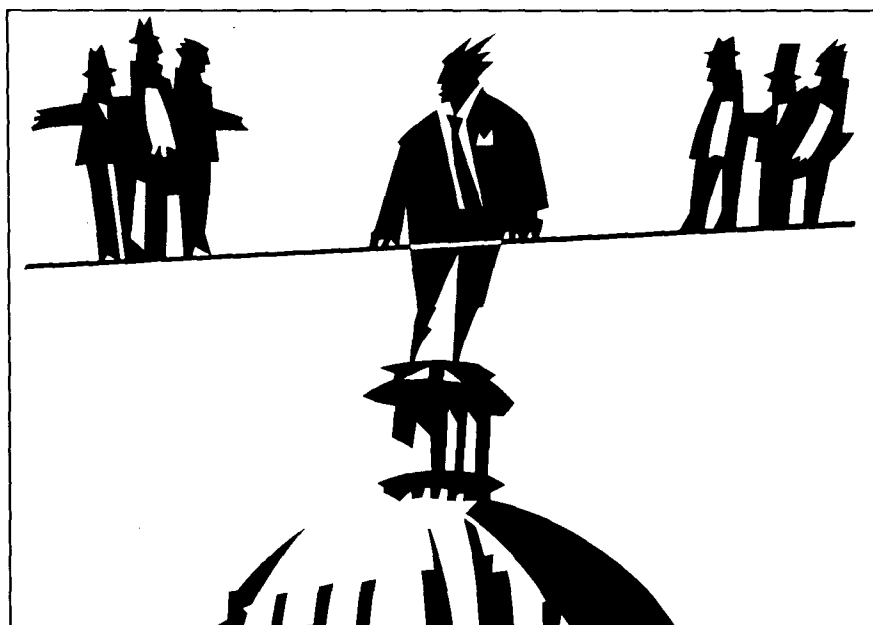
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that I could get rid of this guilt only by taking it to the Lord and asking for forgiveness." After reading two brief passages from the Book of Matthew, the colonel concluded, "We should not let loyalty to an individual supersede our loyalty to an institution based on the Lord's law, and that's the military."

The room got very quiet. As the colonel returned to his seat, I sensed the relief he felt at finally getting this episode into the open. Expiation of his guilt had required more than talking to the Lord—it had required talking with his fellow officers. Similar candidness

would probably help others at the college. Many are still haunted by painful memories of the war, memories pressing to be shared. In this critical area, however, the Army War College is not much help. The school, like the U.S. military generally, still finds Vietnam too traumatic to give it the attention it deserves. As the institution seeks to prepare our officers for the next century, Vietnam constitutes a missing link. Until our senior officers come to terms with the last war, they will not be prepared to fight the next one.

—Michael Massing



WASHINGTON

The In-Box President

George Bush is a master of an unheroic politics in which everything, or almost everything, is negotiable

GEORGE BUSH was elected President in 1988 because most American voters were satisfied with the status quo. What we got is a status-quo President.

So far, the status quo has been Bush's principal source of strength. The economy has stayed pretty much on track. There has been no major foreign-policy calamity. True, 1989 was

a great year for Washington scandals, but they involved either members of Congress or Reagan Administration officials.

Bush has averaged a 63 percent job-approval rating in Gallup polls. Ronald Reagan's job-approval rating for his first year in office, when he struck out in bold new directions, averaged only 57 percent. That's what you get for taking risks.

After eight years of Reagan, Americans may have had enough vision for a while. Bush has done what the voters elected him to do. He has managed the status quo. We are, by and large, a nation of happy campers, to borrow a phrase from Vice President Dan Quayle.

The down side is that President Bush is hostage to the status quo. Suppose the economy goes into a tailspin, as it did under Reagan in 1982. Suppose Bush makes a terrible blunder, as

Reagan did in the Iran-contra affair. Would the voters stay the course? And just what is the course, anyway?

Reagan was not a status-quo President. "Ronald Reagan was a successful candidate and an effective President above all else because he stood for a set of ideas," one observer has maintained. "He stated them in 1980, and it turned out that he meant them; and he wrote most of them not only into public law but into the national consciousness." That assessment was offered by Senator Edward M. Kennedy last March, at Yale University.

Reagan could be remarkably open and bold, as he was in his response to Mikhail Gorbachev. He could also be terribly naive, and his grand schemes were often grand illusions—painless deficits, Star Wars, freedom fighters, his offer at the Reykjavik summit to abolish nuclear weapons. But no one ever said Reagan was fearful of change.

That is exactly what people say about George Bush. "I think this perhaps is a time for caution," President Bush said last spring, when asked to comment on the student protests in Beijing. In China, Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union millions of people were putting their lives on the line for democracy. But all the U.S. Secretary of State had to say was, "I don't think it would be in the best interests of the United States for us to see significant instability in the People's Republic of China, just like I don't think it's in the best interests of the United States for us to see significant instability in [the USSR]." In other words, democracy is fine so long as it doesn't disturb the status quo.

Ronald Reagan was a creature of the 1960s. He was elected governor of California in 1966 in a wave of popular revulsion over racial violence (the rioting in Watts) and student protests (the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley). Reagan often saw issues as "us" versus "them." Bush, on the other hand, set out to smooth over the bitter divisions of American politics. In his inaugural address Bush lamented the fact that "a certain divisiveness" had emerged in our political life, "in which not each other's ideas are challenged but each other's motives."

Bush called on the nation to end the 1960s. "This is the age of the offered hand," the President said. "I yearn for a greater tolerance, an easygoingness

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about each other's attitudes and way of life." This from the man who had just run a harsh, negative campaign attacking his opponent's "values" on issues like the pledge of allegiance and furloughs for criminals.

Bush changed his image three times in one year. During the 1988 primaries he was Bush the Wimp, the man the Democrats loved to make fun of. ("Poor George, he can't help it," the Democrats' keynote convention speaker said. "He was born with a silver foot in his mouth.") He became Bush the Tough Guy in the general election, when he followed a script written by Lee Atwater, his campaign manager. Then he got elected and changed to a script by James Baker, the ultimate Washington insider. Virtually overnight he was transformed into Bush the Old Pro—cautious, reassuring, and thoroughly pragmatic.

What is missing in Bush is the hard core of conviction that one could always sense in Reagan. "I believe in unions, I believe in nonunions," Bush once said while touring a furniture factory in North Carolina. When he refused to compromise with Congress on the budget, when he defied the air-traffic controllers' strike, and when he stood by his nomination of Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court, Reagan made it clear that important issues of principle were at stake.

The Bork debate was positively elevated compared with the fight over Bush's nomination of John Tower to be Secretary of Defense. Bork raised fundamental constitutional issues like original intent and the limits of judicial activism. The only principle at stake in Bush's last-ditch defense of Tower was executive privilege. Stubbornness without conviction gets a President into trouble. Jimmy Carter was at his best—the Camp David negotiations, the Panama Canal treaties—when his stubbornness was rooted in principle. Reagan was at his worst—the Iran-contra affair, the Bitburg incident—when his principles were unclear.

Bush also seems to lack Reagan's personal security. Reagan said a lot of nutty things, but he was at ease with himself, and that was reassuring. Over time the public became convinced that he was not going to start a nuclear war or throw old people out into the snow. (Poor people were another matter.) Bush, on the other hand, usually says

sensible things, and he goes out of his way to sound reassuring ("a kinder, gentler nation"). But he is so easily rattled that he makes people nervous. Last September, when reporters confronted him with evidence that federal agents had set up a drug deal in a park across the street from the White House to provide a prop for his speech on drug policy, Bush responded angrily, "I don't understand. I mean, has somebody got some advocates here for this drug guy?"

Bush seems paralyzed by two fears—the fear of being called a wimp and the fear of creating controversy. Our greatest tragedies as President, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, were haunted by deep personal insecurities. They kept polls in their pockets and made lists of enemies. Bush seems nowhere near that level of paranoia or vindictiveness. But he has been described as "ill at ease . . . in his own skin," and that is not a good sign.

Reagan's style was to take a firm stand, rally public support, and challenge Congress to give him what he wanted. Bush's style is to make a deal. He negotiates quietly, outside the glare of publicity and with as little rancor as possible. He then announces a compromise, shifts his position to accommodate the outcome, and invites the country to applaud the spirit of bipartisanship and cooperation.

Almost every year Reagan would go to the wall on the federal budget and military aid to the contras. Bush made deals with Congress early last year on both issues. The deals had serious flaws, but at least the two sides agreed to agree. The country was spared the usual gunfight at the O.K. Corral over budget policy and contra aid. In May, Bush averted a NATO crisis by hammering out a compromise among the allies. In October he made a deal with the Democrats to raise the minimum wage but allow for a temporary training wage for teenagers.

The Bush Administration has made progress on issues that seemed hopelessly stalemated during the Reagan years—clean air, the minimum wage, the contras. This progress has deflected criticism by the Democrats. They can hardly complain about a President who wants to make a deal with them.

Bush sees the President as the great facilitator, not the great communicator.



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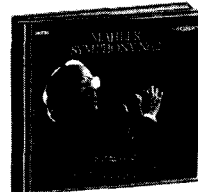
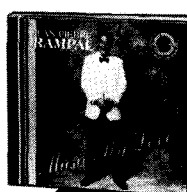
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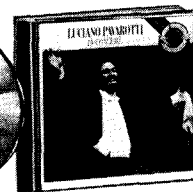
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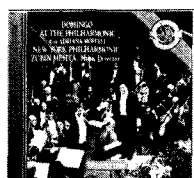


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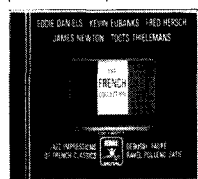
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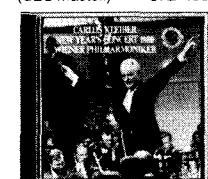
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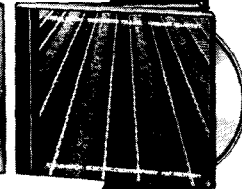
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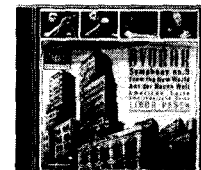


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His is an unheroic politics in which everything, or almost everything, is negotiable. Reagan believed that raising the minimum wage was wrong, that Americans have an absolute right to bear arms, and that the Sandinista government is an intolerable threat to U.S. security. Bush has been willing to compromise on all these points.

There are two issues on which Bush has drawn the line, however—abortion and taxes. Like Reagan, Bush will not compromise his “principles” on these issues. But Reagan was an ideologue; he believed what he believed, reality be damned. Bush is a pragmatist, so the conflict with reality is more of a problem for him. In his only prime-time television speech to the nation, Bush called for a national war on drugs, but he refused to ask Americans to make any sacrifices to pay for it. In October he vetoed a bill that would have extended Medicaid funding to poor women who are the victims of rape or incest. Reagan’s stubborn fealty to principles conveyed an image of strength. Bush’s willingness to compromise on everything except abortion and taxes conveys an image of calculation, religious conservatives and affluent suburbanites being the core constituencies in the GOP coalition.

The Bush Administration does bring a high standard of professionalism to government. That’s not such a bad thing, considering that professionalism was often conspicuously missing during the Reagan years. Bush’s appointments have fallen into two categories. His political choices, all of them controversial, have come from the right wing of the party—Quayle for Vice President, Atwater for Republican Party chairman, and John Sununu for White House chief of staff. In the realm of policy-making, however, Bush has been more cautious. He kept on a number of Reagan appointees, all of whom were regarded as moderates—Nicholas Brady in the Treasury Department, Richard Thornburgh in the Justice Department, William Webster at the CIA, and Lauro Cavazos in the Department of Education. Bush’s Secretary of State, James Baker, was reviled by conservatives when he served as Reagan’s chief of staff.

These people are not agenda-setters. They are problem-solvers. Like Bush himself, they offer strong qualifications and considerable experience.

Moreover, they have records of accomplishment independent of their relationship with George Bush. With Bush the rule seems to be no ideological hard-liners, no Evil Empire-baiters, no economic cranks, “no Bozos.” And no bold new ideas.

What all this professionalism adds up to is not exactly leadership. It is more like management. Bush’s policies have been reactive. The United States responds, cautiously and reluctantly, to others’ proposals. It is an in-box approach to governing. You respond to problems as they reach your desk, and you do whatever is necessary to get them off your desk.

THERE IS A peculiar rhythm to the Bush presidency. A crisis suddenly emerges and dominates the public agenda—an oil spill in Alaska, a new Soviet proposal on arms control, a hostage quandary in the Middle East, a stolen election in Panama, a NATO conflict, a savings-and-loan problem, mass protests in China, an emergency in Poland. The press attacks the administration for weakness and indecision. Commentators accuse Bush of having no policy to deal with the situation. The administration responds that it is being prudent. Critics say it is being timid.

Suddenly the President steps in and makes a dramatic gesture. There is a burst of activity, heads get banged together, and a compromise results. The crisis ends, even though the problem may be unresolved. (Noriega is still in power, American hostages are still in Lebanon, and the Alaskan coastline is still befouled.) The press pronounces Bush’s intervention a success. The President’s popularity goes up. And public attention shifts to something else. Bush has kept up with his in-box.

Bush is a master of the politics of good intentions. In his inaugural address he declared, “We have work to do” and ticked off the nation’s problems—homelessness, child poverty, crime, drug addiction. He called for “a new activism, hands-on and involved, that gets the job done.” But what did he intend to do? Whatever it was, it would not involve spending a lot of money. “The old solution . . . was to think that public money alone could end these problems,” the new President told the nation. “But we have learned that this is not so. . . . We

have more will than wallet, but will is what we need." It is hard to quarrel with Bush's assertion that money alone cannot solve our problems. But how can they be solved *without* money? Governor Mario Cuomo tried to call Bush's bluff when he wrote in September, "President Bush has done all he can with speeches. Now he has to produce resources that will deliver on his promises or concede to the nation that he is still an unconverted conservative [trying] to earn himself some cheap grace by reciting a little Democratic poetry."

U.S. DIPLOMATIC initiatives have been as limited as U.S. domestic initiatives, and for the same reason: there isn't any money. At the economic summit in Paris last July the United States had to persuade other countries to help foot the bill on critical issues like international debt relief and economic aid for Poland and Hungary.

Mindful of appearing too defensive and reactive, George Bush began his

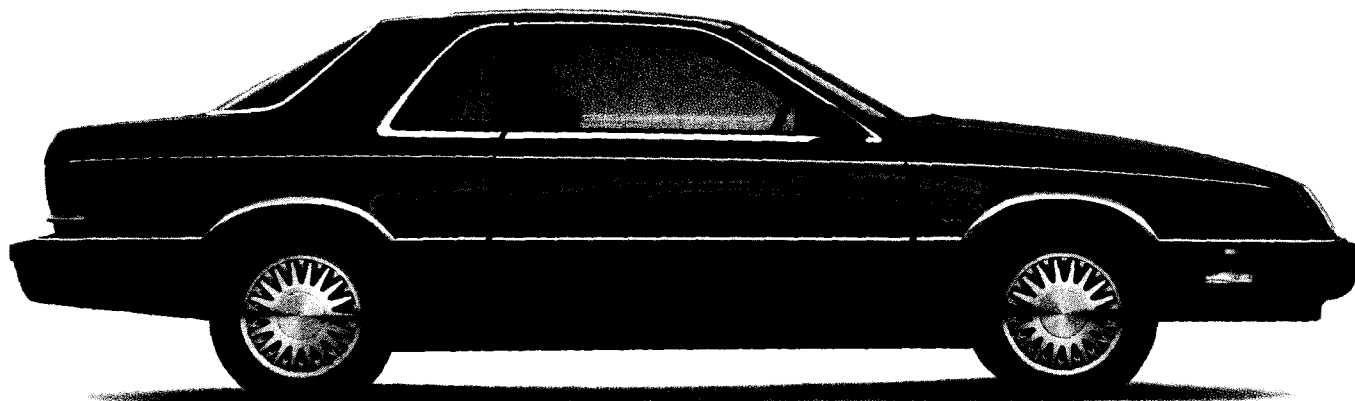
presidency by ordering a comprehensive policy review to figure out how the United States should meet Gorbachev's bold challenge. After months of effort the review concluded that the United States could no longer remain in the position of defending the status quo. The report recommended that the United States broaden the agenda instead, and offer the world something new—"the status quo plus."

Last spring, when Gorbachev said he would stop sending weapons to Nicaragua, the White House responded with annoyance. Its press spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, dismissed the gesture as a "public-relations gambit" perpetrated by a "drugstore cowboy." When the Soviets announced that they would withdraw 500 nuclear missiles from Europe, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney complained that they have "so many ratholes over there in Eastern Europe that 500 is a pittance." That kind of grudging, small-minded response reinforces our status-quo image. The world changes, and the United States stands still.

When President Bush announced that he would have an "interim, informal" meeting in December with Gorbachev, he explained, "I just didn't want to, in this time of dynamic change, miss something." The world is waiting for a Bush Doctrine that defines the American response to the Communist Reformation. The Bush Doctrine so far might be characterized as "this might not really be happening." When East Germany opened the Berlin Wall on November 9, the country longed to hear a Kennedy or a Reagan say, "We are all Berliners now." What it heard Bush say was, "We are not trying to give anybody a hard time." When Bush announced the "non-summit summit," he said, "Neither President Gorbachev nor I anticipate that substantial decisions or agreements will emerge from this December meeting." If that is the case (and at this writing it is still unclear), 1989 could go down in history as The Year of Missed Opportunities.

In September the Senate majority leader, George Mitchell, accused the

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administration of being so ambivalent about changes in the communist world that it often sounded "nostalgic about the Cold War." Secretary Baker's response stirred up a controversy in Washington. He said, "When the President of the United States is rocking along with a seventy-percent approval rating on his handling of foreign policy, if I were the leader of the opposition, I might have something similar to say." The Secretary appeared to acknowledge what the poll results about foreign intervention confirm—that the Bush Administration's cautious, measured approach to foreign policy is essentially politics-driven. Reaganism without risks.

Even embarrassments can be rendered harmless, as long as the President is careful to stay within the boundaries of favorable public opinion. The United States encouraged a coup in Panama, we supported a coup in Panama, and we may have even helped plan a coup in Panama. But we did not take the risk of intervening. The polls revealed that most Americans did not support the use of U.S. troops to remove General Noriega. Nothing was ventured and nothing was gained. The administration's cautious, risk-averse approach kept us out of trouble. On the other hand, the Panama issue keeps turning up in the President's in-box.

The administration is confident, however, that its strategy of prudence will pay off. A State Department official used a revealing, and distressingly shallow, metaphor to explain the Bush foreign policy to *The New York Times*. He said, "The Soviet game is chess, where you think out your strategy ten moves ahead, and Gorbachev is a chess player. Our game is baseball. You play it one inning at a time, but it's the final score that counts. Gorbachev may hit an occasional grand slam. We are going to try to win on singles."

HOWEVER TIMID OR UNIMAGINATIVE their policies may be, the Republicans can usually rely on one thing to save them. That is the greater incompetence of the Democrats. The Democrats have repeatedly been spooked, for instance, by President Bush's "good cop-bad cop" routine—his habit of making gestures of bipartisanship and compromise while his party operatives play dirty.

The GOP strategy is to force roll-call votes in Congress on controversial issues like flag-burning and censorship. The expectation is that in the 1990 mid-term elections Democrats who take unpopular positions on these issues can be exposed as liberals whose values are outside the mainstream of American politics. The Republicans want to do to all Democrats what Bush did to Michael Dukakis in 1988.

In 1989, however, it was the Republicans who looked vulnerable on social issues like gun control and abortion. Nevertheless, it was the Democrats who seemed more nervous about "values." They didn't want Lee Atwater to use their records as he had used Dukakis's record, for target practice.



There is one lesson the Democrats have been unable to learn from the Republicans—how to behave like an opposition party. After thirty-five years in the minority, the Republicans in Congress have finally mastered the art of keeping Democrats on the defensive. Democrats, however, persist in believing that they run the country. After all, they have a lock on Congress. As a result, Democratic congressional leaders seem to feel more comfortable acting as partners with a Republican President than they do acting as the loyal opposition.

What's more, they don't seem to understand that their basic problem in the Bush era isn't values. It's taxes. Ever since the Great Inflation and the tax revolt of the late 1970s, Republi-

cans have used anti-tax sentiment to control the political agenda.

From the 1930s through the 1960s the spending issue enabled Democrats to maintain their political hegemony. Now the Republicans are doing precisely the same thing with taxes. The national consensus has changed, and Democrats are finding tax cuts as irresistible as Republicans used to find spending bills. The anti-tax consensus helped produce the single biggest victory of the Bush presidency to date—the September 28 vote in the House of Representatives to lower the tax rate on capital gains for two years. Democratic leaders condemned what they called "a tax giveaway to the wealthy." But they found little popular resistance to a measure that raised no one's taxes and held out the possibility of some gains for everyone. So House Democratic leaders tried to outbid the Bush Administration by offering a better deal. They tried the same thing in 1981, when Ronald Reagan proposed his original tax cut. It didn't work in 1981, and it didn't work in 1989, at least not in the House. In the Senate, Democratic leaders stalled the tax cut by preventing the issue from coming to a vote.

The catastrophic-illness plan is a good example of the shift in the public agenda from spending to taxes. The program to insure Medicare recipients against catastrophic illnesses was the only major new domestic program of the 1980s. It passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 328 to 72 in 1988. The program was held up as a model of how to finance social initiatives in the deficit era. It would be financed in part by "supplemental premiums" paid by more-affluent Medicare recipients. Everyone in government, including Ronald Reagan and George Bush, seemed to view these premiums as user fees. Those who paid the premiums would get the insurance coverage.

But the program was strangled at birth. Elderly Americans discovered that what they were really paying was a tax. Moreover, they were being taxed to pay for a benefit that most of them felt they did not need. The result was a wave of angry protest calling for repeal of the plan. Which is exactly what the House voted to do, 360 to 66, last year. Something important had changed in American politics. The elderly had always been a prime spending constitu-



ency. Suddenly a vocal minority of them started militating against taxes. Virtually no one who stood to benefit from the new program spoke out in defense of it. This was very bad news for the Democrats. How could they talk about "a new agenda for social progress" if no one was willing to pay for it?

IN THE LONG run Bush's biggest problem will come not from the opposition party—the Democrats don't know what they are—but from the challenge of holding two different constituencies together. His tough, hard-hitting, right-wing election campaign, including the selection of Quayle as his running mate, enabled him to keep Reagan's conservative coalition together. This was the Bush who said, "Read my lips: No new taxes." Reaganites were reassured. They looked at Bush and said, "He's one of us."

Bush used his transition to reassure the Washington establishment that he was really a cautious, moderate prag-

matist. This was the Bush who announced to the Republican National Convention in 1988, "I don't hate government." "Good old George," the Washington power elite said to one another. "He's one of us."

Well, which is he? The establishment is bothered by the President's occasional political vulgarity—his tolerance of Atwater, the flag-burning amendment—and by his failure to engage in serious negotiations on the deficit. But it approves of the administration's high standards of professionalism. Conservatives are uneasy about the sincerity of Bush's commitment to Star Wars, the contras, and gun control. But they are encouraged by his refusal to compromise on taxes and abortion.

The balance is holding right now because things are going well for Bush. But will either the conservatives or the establishment be there when Bush gets into trouble? Conservatives have never really trusted Bush. As Anthony Dolan, the chief speechwriter for President Reagan, wrote recently in

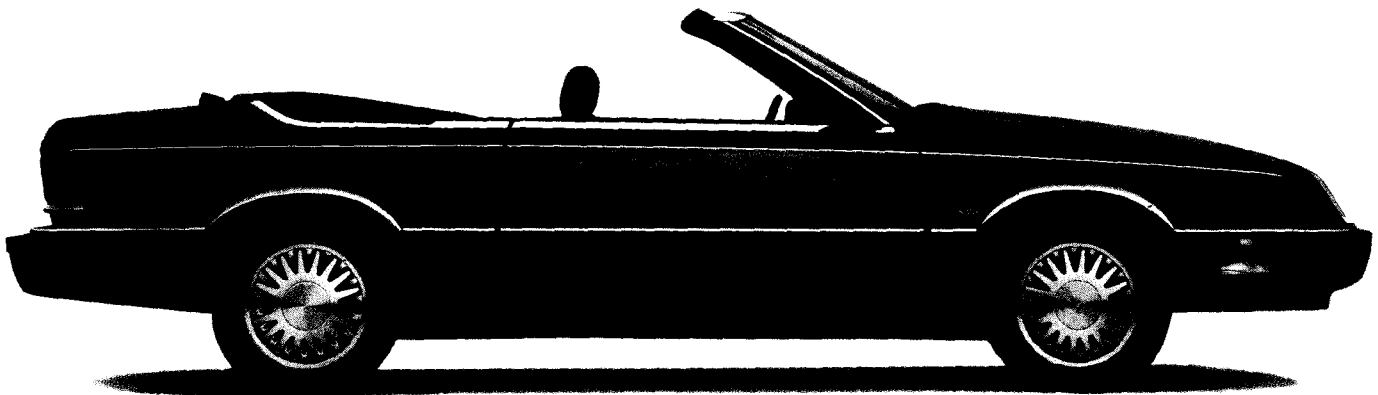
The New York Times, "If [Democrats] can back the President off on his pledges to conservatives on the emotional issues—taxes, contras, defense or a Supreme Court nominee—they rob him of the intensity and the depth of personal support that would make permanent his hold on conservative voters."

Nor does the establishment's good will provide much of a political base. The power elite will stick with a President only as long as his policies are successful. If things suddenly start to fall apart, the power elite will be the first to abandon him, as it did Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. Like Ford and Carter—other Presidents who had trouble with "the vision thing"—Bush will be judged entirely on his effectiveness.

Bush's popularity reflects a simple fact: he appears to be the right President for the times. The country is not in the mood for big ambitions right now, and Bush isn't offering any. Bush has only one thing to worry about—the fact that times change.

—William Schneider

or, under no roof.



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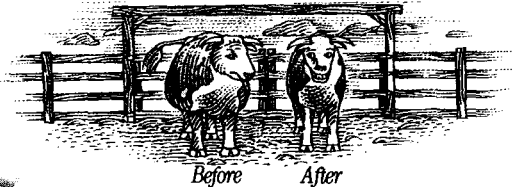
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TOP ROUND
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Source: U.S.D.A. Handbook No. 8-13



EYE OF ROUND
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(2.1 gms sat. fat)
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TENDERLOIN
7.9 gms total fat*
(3.1 gms sat. fat)
174 calories



SIRLOIN
7.4 gms total fat*
(3.0 gms sat. fat)
177 calories

The economist Lester Thurow, the dean of MIT's Sloan School of Management, is on a crusade to rescue American capitalism from itself

THE MAN WITH ALL THE ANSWERS

BY CHARLES C. MANN



LESTER THUROW LIKES TO TELL A STORY about a big factory he saw a while ago in South Korea. The factory is owned by Daewoo, a Korean corporation that makes cars, ships, computers, and many other things. Most Americans, Thurow suspects, think that Korea looks like *M*A*S*H*: rickshaws and grass huts. The Daewoo factory did not look like *M*A*S*H*. Indeed, it didn't look like the common conception of a factory. The most modern of its type in the world, the plant was not dirty, hot, or smelly; nor was it filled with grease monkeys

in sweaty T-shirts. Instead, the floors gleamed like marble, the place was almost quiet, and the workers were educated folk in crisp laboratory coats—running Daewoo's fleet of fancy robots is no job for unskilled workers.

At this point in his narration Thurow tells people that the Daewoo factory uses German and Japanese technology and is run entirely by Koreans. "The only American in the place that day," he says, "was me, the tourist."

Here he pauses. Inevitably somebody asks, "What did they make at this place?"

"Pontiac LeMans," Thurow says. "Sedans."

Establishment or Oligarchy?

IT IS EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING AT AN OFFICERS' club on a military base in northern Virginia. Outside it is raining buckets; inside, a crowd of damp MIT alumni is about to hear a man make an after-dinner speech. The speaker has wiry red hair, graying elegantly at the temples, and the pale, almost papery skin that often goes with red hair. His head is a bit large for his body; his eyes are the kind of blue that people use the word "icy" to describe. "Hello," he says. "I'm Lester Thurow."

Chances are pretty good that this introduction is unnecessary. Lester Thurow is probably the most famous economist in America who has not been the host of a PBS television series. In addition to visiting factories all over the world, Thurow has spent the past two decades sitting on blue-ribbon committees, giving interviews to electronic and print media, and writing twelve books (one of which, *The Zero-Sum Society*, was a best seller), scores of articles (a listing of which fills twenty-five single-spaced pages in his résumé), and hundreds of newspaper columns (he is featured regularly in newspapers from Los Angeles to Milan). Many of these newspaper columns, articles, books, interviews, blue-ribbon committees, and speeches have created a certain controversy, for Thurow has tried to use them to—well, to make America wake up and smell the coffee. Tonight's speech to the MIT alumni is part of the crusade.

Thurow begins, as he often does, with some numbers. The 1988 trade deficit was \$127.2 billion, the budget deficit \$145.8 billion; the world's biggest debtor, Uncle Sam owes foreigners \$532.5 billion—half a trillion dollars. The figures are gigantic, as unimaginable as the population of the earth or the distance to the sun; Thurow calls them out in a hushed, dramatic voice, and his audience reacts with fitting shock. At one table a woman actually gasps.

Although the sums make an impact, it seems fair to say that few people know exactly what these numbers mean,

or what Thurow means by them. (In fact, the woman who gasped later whispers, "I never understand this stuff" to her companion, who shrugs to indicate his own bafflement.) The trade and budget deficits today are what the price of oil was in the 1970s—an index of American anxiety. Newscasters compare the current deficits with those of last month, or last year, and people infer from the ups and downs how bad to feel at a given time. When the numbers are as big as Thurow makes them sound, you are supposed to know that the country has a million problems.

The evening is not, however, a session in breast-beating. Thurow is an optimist; America may have a million problems, but Thurow has a million answers. He smiles as they leap from his head—his hair seems to stand on end with them, and one's hand aches from writing them down. Indeed, that night—and in the lectures, panel discussions, and interviews he will give over the next few months—Thurow suggests, with varying degrees of conviction, that people who own more than 20 percent of a company should be forced to give a day's notice before selling their stock; that people should be paid to live near airports, waste dumps, and nuclear power plants; that antitrust laws should be eliminated, except for rules about price-gouging; that Brazil should charge the rest of the hemisphere for the oxygen made by its rain forest; that if the Common Market turns Europe into a single closed trade bloc in 1992, the United States may end up forming another one with Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, leaving Japan in the cold; that stockholders should have full voting rights only after owning their shares for five years; that outlawing handguns is a waste of time; that Congress should prohibit home-equity loans; that Congress should pass a \$1.50-a-gallon tax on gasoline; that Congress should set up a stiff national exam to determine which high school seniors will go to college, and that students who fail this exam should not be allowed to go to college; that teachers and principals with many students who pass this exam should be rewarded with cash bonuses ("Hey, why not trips to Europe?"); that minimum payments on credit cards should be regulated upward; that banks should be encouraged to sit on the boards of the companies they lend money to (they can't now); that the interest corporations pay on bonds should be taxed (it isn't now); that insurance companies should manage the corporations in which they own stock (they don't now).

He is addressing

The Japanese aren't buying America, we're selling it. We're consuming a hundred billion a year more than we produce. They have to buy some of America with the money—what else can they do with it all?

members of the Washington, D.C., alumni association of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he says that night, for two reasons: because they are from MIT, where he is dean of the Alfred P. Sloan School of Management, and because they are representative of the establishment—or, at least, he hopes they are. (That's why they went to MIT, right?) "What do I mean by the establishment?" he asks. "An establishment is a bunch of people with a lot of money who know each other and who run the country. Now, an oligarchy is also a bunch of people with a lot of money who know each other and who run the country." The difference, he says, is that an establishment recognizes that its long-term interests may require it now and then to take smaller profits in the present. The United States had an establishment in the immediately postwar era, when the nation's leaders persuaded the reluctant American people to spend billions on the Marshall Plan. The United States had an oligarchy in the 1920s, when the ruling class in its exuberant greed let the economy spin out of control.

"The question is, do we have an establishment now, or do we have an oligarchy? Are you"—a challenging sweep of the hand to the well-dressed, still-damp Washington executives—"an establishment, or are you an oligarchy?"

"If America is to prosper in the future, it has to change now. An establishment will help that change occur. An oligarchy will pull the country down with it."

If the elite does not wake up, Thurow says, the long-term economic future of the country will be at risk. The United States, he believes, is in danger of changing from a relatively rich nation to a relatively poor one; we are on the road trod before us by England, and by Argentina. Disaster can be forestalled if the public is roused to action now, when the evidence of trouble is limited; if we wait a decade or two, the house will fall in, and the task of reconstruction will be wrenching. That is why he is ringing the bell tonight.

Pop Quiz No. 1: Is 1990 Like 1914?

ECONOMICS TEACHERS OFTEN PROCEED BY GIVING hypothetical examples and asking students questions designed to elicit conclusions appropriate to the lessons the teachers want to impart. In this spirit, imagine a country that owes a sum equal to a fifth of its gross national product—a country that is the world's biggest debtor, and has been for more than thirty years. A country with its chemical, communications, and transportation industries mostly in foreign hands. A country with a nagging trade deficit. A country with a rocky history of economic ups and downs. A country that foreigners with stronger currencies are buying up at an ever-increasing rate.

Question: Will future generations regard that country as one in which the solid, old-fashioned virtues of thrift and sound investment prevailed?

Answer: Yes. The country described is the United States in 1914. That year the United States owed more than \$7 billion to foreigners. The sum seems laughably small now, but in 1914 a billion dollars was a *billion* dollars, an eye-popping sum in a nation where the output of goods and services was only \$36 billion.

Such debt provoked outrage, especially at the British, our biggest creditors, who some Americans thought were winning back through finance what they had lost in war. "It is to this brute of greed and cruelty, this merciless hog, this devilfish from over the sea, that we are surrendering our families," cried one Kansas populist. "Forbid it, Heaven! Is there no voice, human or divine, that can awaken the American people to a sense of their danger?"

Question: Were these people wrong?

Answer: Apparently.

Question: Why were they wrong?

Answer: Because the simple existence of a foreign debt means nothing. Reduced to its basics, America's total foreign debt is the difference between what foreigners owe Americans and what we owe foreigners. Germans buying U.S. Treasury bonds, Saudi Arabians depositing dollars in New York banks, Japanese buying ranches in Montana—all are dumped on the debt side of the ledger, because all involve a promise by people in this country to pay something in the future to people in other countries. The exact pathways of such transactions are often complicated, but they always end up with foreigners providing Americans with something of value—often money—and Americans giving foreigners IOUs in return. When Germans buy Treasury bonds, the U.S. government borrows their money, and promises to repay it with interest; when Saudis deposit money, American banks are borrowing it from them; and have to return that money with interest too. (Real estate counts as a debt for bookkeeping reasons—when the Japanese buy a ranch, they can't take it home with them, and in some sense this country therefore still owes them the ranch.) Inevitably, such debts have to be repaid. A foreigner with a hundred-dollar IOU has a lien on a hundred dollars' worth of something from the United States.

There is nothing wrong with such liens per se. As the economic historian Mira Wilkins has shown in her elaborately detailed *History of Foreign Investment in the United States to 1914*, most of what we borrowed from foreigners at the turn of the century was used to build the American railway system. This lowered the cost of transportation and gave American companies access to bigger markets. That in turn helped American industry grow, which increased the gross national product enough to make paying back the debt fairly painless. On balance, Wilkins argues, the United States was better off for getting into hock. We needed the money from foreign nations to build up our own country.

Question: Is 1990 like 1914? That is, have we accumulated a huge foreign debt because we needed money

from foreign nations to make an investment in the future prosperity of the country?

To pose the question, as Thurow likes to say, is to answer it.

Montana Boy

LESTER THUROW WAS BORN ON MAY 7, 1938, IN LIVINGSTON, Montana. Nowadays Livingston is mildly chic; actors and writers have moved to the Paradise Valley, south of town, bringing with them tourists, real-estate promoters, and trend-spotting journalists. Livingston was a small Montana town at a time when the definition of a small Montana town was two bars within a mile of each other; a favorite local pastime was telling jokes about people from North Dakota. (Hear about the Montanan who moved to North Dakota? He raised the average IQ in both states.) Thurow's father was a Methodist minister; his mother taught high school math. The Methodist church moved its ministers from parish to parish every few years, and so Thurow spent his childhood in a succession of rectories in rural Montana. "In that kind of Montana town," he says, "the people who had gone to college tended to be the minister, the lawyer, the doctor, and the school-teacher." So Thurow's family had two of the four.

Thurow, as the preacher's kid, was a sissy until proved otherwise. He learned to be quick of foot and tongue. (Hear about the North Dakota coyote that got caught in a trap? It chewed off three of its legs before it got free.) He spent much of his time outdoors, hiking and fishing. As a teenager, he moved with his family to Anaconda, a small city almost wholly owned by the now defunct Anaconda Copper Mining Company. "The company was interested in having good science education," Thurow says, "so that some of these people would go off and become mining engineers." Thurow did not want to become a mining engineer, but Anaconda gave him an education anyway. As a result he was reasonably well prepared when he entered Williams College, in 1956.

People today describe the 1950s as a time when students minded their own business and did not wear complicated haircuts. Thurow, however, recalls his college days somewhat differently. The dorm rooms were thick with debate about civil rights, space, and the Soviet Union. "I don't think it's an old man's memory, but I honestly don't remember a single conversation at Williams about getting a good job to make a lot of money."

He wanted to change the world for the better. He also wanted a profession that he could carry in his back pocket—that would let him be independent of institutions. One of the teachers at Williams that Thurow admired was Kermit Gordon, who later became the head of The Brookings Institution, an influential think tank. Wishing to help society improve the lot of the citizenry, Thurow quite naturally followed Gordon into economics. More

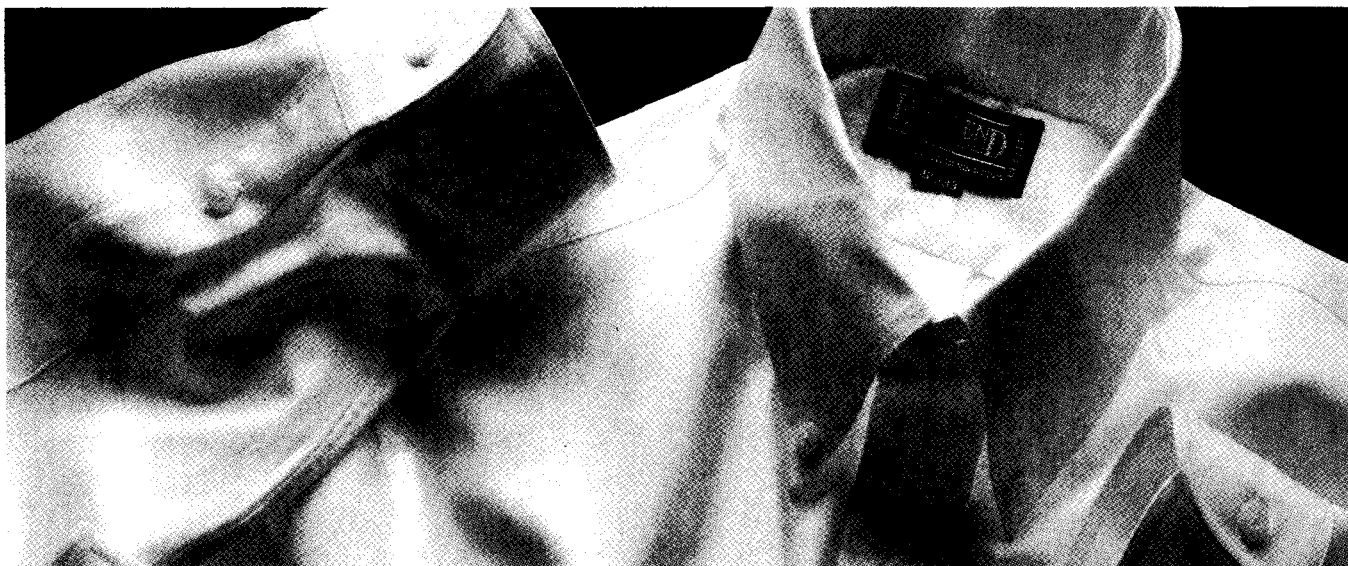
precisely, he followed him into macroeconomics, the study of whole economic systems, as opposed to microeconomics, the study of small-scale economic behavior. Thurow did well at Williams, becoming a Rhodes scholar; his Ph.D., from Harvard, was granted in 1964. His first job was as a staff economist for the Council of Economic Advisers, one of whose members was Gordon. Thurow had a pleasant image of himself yo-yoing up and down the Boston-Washington corridor, going from academia to government and from government to academia, gaining in prestige with every cycle.

In retrospect, it was a glorious time to be a macroeconomist. The United States had emerged from the Second World War with the strongest economy in the world. According to some estimates, as much as 40 percent of the world's output was made between the Rio Grande and the Canadian border. The country simply had no competition; the rest of the developed world was still picking through the rubble. ("For thirty-five years we had effortless superiority," Thurow says. "Graciously, we'd talk about allowing Japan to get a start in a particular industry.") Yet despite these enormous advantages the nation spent much of the Eisenhower Administration staggering from one recession to another. To economists, the reason for this was obvious: Eisenhower didn't believe in economists. In 1961 John Kennedy imported Walter Heller and a load of other smart Ph.D.s to Washington. In keeping with their advice, taxes were cut. The country went into boom mode, and Heller became a national hero.

The applause ended with Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson wanted to fight the war but believed the country would not be willing to pay for it with new taxes. Thurow says, "Gardner Ackley, who was chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, actually went to the President and said, 'Mr. President, you're making a mistake.' Basically, what Johnson evidently said was, 'Well, you're probably right. I'm making an economic mistake, but politically I'm not making a mistake.'" The President's decision, Thurow believes, was catastrophic. "Fouling up the economy wasn't done by accident," he says. "It was done deliberately, with everybody's eyes wide open."

Volumes have been devoted to what happened to the country as a result of Johnson's choice. After 1965 Republicans won five out of six presidential elections. Among the many consequences of this lock on the White House was the derailling of Thurow's commuter train between the Beltway and the university. He became a professor at MIT in 1968 and has remained there ever since, churning out interviews, articles, and books, each and every one an attempt to move the world into a slightly better orbit.

Never a major contributor to refereed scholarly journals, Thurow's flood of popular and semipopular writing has inevitably raised what he calls "the substance question." ("Lester Thurow?" a prominent microeconomist asks. "You mean 'Less Than Thorough'? He's just proof



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that you don't need a license to practice this profession.") Perhaps in reaction, Thurow describes himself as an "economics educator"—a public intellectual who specializes in economics. A man of action rather than a doodler with equations, he rides on newspapers and magazines to America's homes, yelling out his warning in orthodox Paul Revere fashion.

His audiences these days are receptive. No surprise: A distinctly contemporary American shiver arises from the sudden discovery that nothing on the shelves in a store bears a "Made in America" sticker. Or from learning that Japanese tourists are a preferred target for New York muggers, because they have more money than Americans—this in a city full of investment bankers! Or from hearing for the first time an automobile mechanic accustomed to BMWs growl, "Whaddya expect from a piece of Detroit junk?" Or from moving to Spain, as Thurow's family did briefly three years ago ("My wife wants our kids to be bilingual"), and having teachers assume that his two children would be behind in mathematics because they went to American schools. Or from hearing that Rockefeller Center has been bought by Mitsubishi, although, truth to tell, Thurow and most economists believe that the "buy-out" of America has been greatly exaggerated. Foreigners may own a famous building or two, but the plain fact is that the vast majority of New York City is still owned by Americans.

"The Japanese aren't buying America," Thurow says. "We're selling it! We're consuming a hundred billion a year more than we produce. They have to buy some of America with the money—what else can they do with it all?"

Pop Quiz No. 2: What Is the Problem?

ECONOMICS TEACHERS OFTEN ASK STUDENTS TO test ideas by looking at real-world examples. In this spirit, examine the familiar notion that the United States is losing ground because its citizens have forgotten how to work. Is this true?

Consider the U.S. garment industry. Hats in hand, garment makers are always begging Congress for more tariffs and import quotas, which ineluctably force everyone else in America to shell out more for their clothes; otherwise, it is intimated, the industry will fall victim to the lower wages and weaker safety rules of Third World sweatshops. Indeed, some economists have argued that saving this industry is impossible, because American workers simply won't do the job at a competitive price. It should be allowed to wither away naturally or, at most, be protected by temporary trade barriers while garment factories in the United States are closed and production moved offshore.

Question: Given the portrait painted above, can a garment industry flourish in an industrialized nation that has lower tariffs, tougher unions, longer vacations, and higher wages than the United States?

Answer: Yes. West Germany is one of the world's major exporters of garments. It has fought tariffs and quotas harder than any other country in Western Europe yet by American standards is a union-buster's nightmare. The German garment industry has higher wages, a guaranteed minimum of three weeks' vacation, fancy health-care packages, half again as many national holidays as the United States, and union regulations governing every aspect of production from layoffs to the organization of shift work. Despite or because of these things, the industry produces high-quality, high-fashion goods that cannot be made in poor nations; more important, the Germans sell them.

Question: If an overpaid, overprotected, overunionized work force is not the cause of the U.S. garment industry's slide, what, then, is the cause?

Effing the Ineffable

INFLATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, OIL SHOCKS, TRADE deficits—the problems seem so multifarious that it is perversely comforting to learn that Thurow and many other economists think the difficulties America has experienced in the past two decades can be encapsulated in a single set of statistics. Computed with data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor and the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the Department of Commerce, the numbers refer to what practitioners of the dismal science call productivity.

Productivity statistics are a way of describing how much output comes from a given input. One of the simplest and most often used measures of productivity is "labor productivity," which is the value created by a person's work. This seems clear as a bell until you think about it. How, for example, would someone determine the productivity of a business-school dean? Ideally, one would try to measure the quanta of education provided by the dean, but how would anyone ever actually do that, let alone agree on a dollar value for education?

Recognizing how hard it is to eff the ineffable, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of Economic Analysis tend to work in broad terms, where individual differences disappear. The government has available to it measures of the gross national product; it also has ways of determining the number of hours people work. The BLS essentially divides one figure by the other, and the answer is the nation's labor productivity. "We've been calculating output per hour since 1909," says Larry Fulco, one of the BLS economists who does just that. "It's all done on a very aggregate level, but the people who study productivity nonetheless feel that this single, abstract statistic explains a lot about what is happening to the country."

All else being equal, economists say, high productivity means a high standard of living. Because the United



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a softly patterned tie; the only trace of his upbringing in Big Sky country was the Indian design on his large silver belt buckle.

Thurrow seemed a little tired that fine morning. In addition to writing, lecturing, and teaching, he is a full-time administrator. (Sample problem: Harvard undergraduates flood the accounting classes at MIT, yet Harvard refuses to hire its own undergraduate accounting faculty.) It makes for a lot of frequent-flyer miles. Last September, for example, he welcomed new M.B.A. students and faculty members to the campus; attended several receptions for visiting dignitaries; delivered warning speeches in Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, and Texas; wrote newspaper columns for the *Boston Globe*, *Die Zeit*, and *Corriere della sera*; visited his family, who are again living in Spain; and met with Boris Yeltsin, the Soviet dissident parliamentarian, on the U.S. economy. He also spent some time, one presumes, musing on the possibility of becoming the next president of MIT (Thurrow has been touted as a dark-horse candidate), a position that would allow him a greater scope for his efforts to change the world. Even Thurrow's hobbies are ferociously time-consuming; he spent months getting up at five in the morning for a punishing regimen of calisthenics and jogging, in preparation for a June ascent of Gasherbrum II, a mountain in Pakistan that is more than 26,000 feet high. Squeezed in was a birthday gift from his wife: sessions with a personal trainer. (In a series of interviews Thurrow exhibits embarrassment only once, when he admits to having "my, ah, personal trainer.")

Thurrow became the head of a business school for the same reason that he went into economics: the job provided a small chance to change America. Having spent a lot of time telling executives that they were failing the nation, he was suddenly given the opportunity to show a generation of M.B.A.s the world according to Lester Thurrow. "I got to put my money where my mouth is," he says. It is typical of Thurrow to say this without the slightest hint of ruefulness.

The Sloan School's graduates tend to be placed on the fast track, and may have a chance to practice what Thurrow preaches. Much of what he tells them can be reduced to three apothegms:

- 1) You will have to manufacture things to survive.
- 2) You will have to compete against other people doing the same thing.
- 3) Right now Americans are not doing enough of either.

Thurrow is not alone in this view. Over the past few years many of America's elite—in business, labor, academia, and government—have become convinced that the slippage in productivity is serious, even dangerous, and that both the problem and the solution lie largely in manufacturing. "Most economists would march shoulder to shoulder on the analysis of what has occurred," says Edwin Mansfield, the director of the Center for Economics

and Technology at the University of Pennsylvania. "Thurrow's a liberal, so conservatives would not agree with all his solutions—but nobody's going to say that the dilemmas he's talking about aren't there."

One way in which Thurrow has stated his ideas about manufacturing can be found in a pamphlet that he and Louise Waldstein, a former student of his, put out last May for the Economic Policy Institute, a Washington think tank that he, along with several like-minded economists, founded in 1986. In it Thurrow and Waldstein split the economy into two principal areas: industry and services. Industry includes manufacturing, mining, agriculture, and construction. Services is everything else. Almost all the 32.6 million full- and part-time jobs created in the United States since 1973 have been in services—one reason for the claim that we live in a "post-industrial society."

Without undue violence to the data, the services category can be broken into three parts: health care, retail trade, and producer services. All three have boomed in recent years. There are more jobs in health care than there were in 1973 because more people have medical insurance, the population is older, and doctors keep coming up with new miracle cures. Retail employment has risen because, among other things, more women are working; that means more people eating in restaurants (Mom isn't cooking dinner) and more stores that stay open late (Mom can't shop while she's working). Producer services includes financial services (investment banking, mutual funds, and so on), commercial real estate (offices, stores, and restaurants), professional services (accounting, law, and computer software), and labor subcontracting (temporary help). If you have seen the movie *Working Girl* (secretary uses brains, sex appeal, and computer spreadsheets to captivate investment banker, and ends up in a fancy office herself), it may not surprise you to learn that producer services, too, have grown enormously over the past fifteen years.

This list of categories comes up because the discussion in Professor Thurrow's applied-macro class somehow came round to the point where a young woman in a cardigan sweater asked if exports of services could help the trade deficit. ("Great," muttered somebody in the first row. "Send Japan enough lawyers and their society is sure to collapse.") Thurrow said that the United States cannot look to its service sector for salvation. No country, he argues, has yet succeeded in exporting services; consequently, locking the country into services is equivalent to locking it into permanent trade deficits. In any case the service sector is not going to grow all that much.

"Why?" asked the woman in the cardigan sweater.

"Many of the service jobs of the past few years came from things like keeping stores open for longer hours," Thurrow said. "Once they're open for twenty-four hours, you simply cannot keep them open for any longer." Similarly, McDonald's won't be hiring as many new employees in the future. "They're already in every town in the

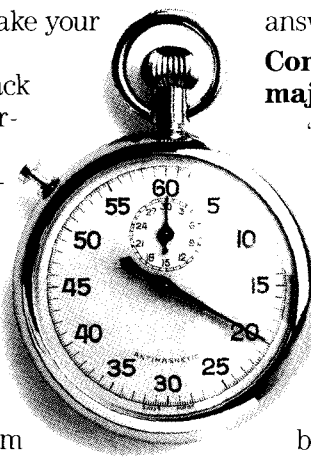


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***Take everything else away and
what do you have left? Manufacturing.
Manufacturing. MAN-U-FAC-TUR-ING.
That's all that's left. You see?
We're going to have to make things
to survive.***

country," he said. "Where else can they expand?" His manner was crisp and confident; Thurow always sounds more certain about nebulous economic concepts than most people feel about anything. The certainty sometimes annoys other, more cautious economists, but students seem to like it. The fact machine in his head unspooling numbers, he began jotting the constituents of the service sector on the blackboard in his scratchy handwriting. *Restaurants and retail trade*, he wrote. "No more McJobs." *Health care*: Costs are already so high that everyone is trying to contain this part of the economy. "No matter what you think about the importance of health care," he said, "Americans are not going to raise their standard of living by giving each other heart transplants." The quip came easily; it's a line from his book *The Zero-Sum Solution*. Laughter filled the classroom; Thurow continued, pleased at the reaction. (An idea encapsulated in a joke is an idea that students will remember.) The chalk squeaked. *Financial services*: The growth was a one-shot adjustment to the creation of a world economy. *Commercial real estate*: With the Baby Boom already absorbed into the labor force, fewer offices will be built. *Professional services*: "Suing each other is a lot of fun"—a nod to the student who detests lawyers—"but it is not productive. In any case the rest of the world will be too smart to import our legal system."

"So," Thurow said to his students, "what's left? Mining and agriculture? Trust me, that's not where you'll see new jobs. Take everything else away, and what do you have left? Manufacturing. *Manufacturing. MAN-U-FAC-TUR-ING. That's all that's left. You see? We're going to have to make things to survive.*"

Unfortunately, so will every other country. In the past, nations often tacitly ceded industries to one another. The United States ceded the trade in transistor radios to Japan; for a while Japan ceded machine tools to us. We gave the wine market to the French and the Italians; they left the soft drinks to us. Now no country wants to do that. Everyone wants a machine-tool industry and an electronics industry and a wine industry. Competition is

head to head in most parts of the economy; American executives keep discovering that foreigners are suddenly standing in their favorite corners. It's unpleasant.

Nobody but economists likes competition. When business people celebrate free enterprise, the freedom they are talking about is the freedom to make money. They are not talking about the freedom to

compete. As the century's gaudy history of cartels and price agreements and tariffs demonstrates, business people have exercised considerable ingenuity in avoiding unrestricted competition. Little wonder! Competition makes life turbulent and uncertain; competition almost always eats into profits. Worse, you can lose at competition.

Pop Quiz No. 3: The Market for Managers

ECONOMICS TEACHERS SOMETIMES TEACH LESSONS by asking students to use economic principles to make predictions about human behavior. In this light, consider the modern corporation. Almost never do the owners of the corporation—that is, the stockholders—actually run it. Instead, the corporation is managed by a team of executives whose compensation comes from salaries, bonuses, stock options, and what have you. Thurow and most other economists teach that human beings are value-maximizers, which is to say that they will always try to make the best possible situation for themselves. If managers are value-maximizers, they will want to extract as much enjoyment from their jobs as possible. Sometimes this means a big bonus for getting that Korean account in shape; other times it means having a hefty expense account, box seats at the Super Bowl, and a trip by private corporate jet to the Maldives. The stockholders, also being value-maximizers, would love to have executives who work for nothing, because this would leave all the firm's profits for the stockholders. Unfortunately, economics suggests that executives who work for nothing are worth what they are paid. Stockholders who want able chief executive officers to run their companies have to compete with other firms to get them, driving up managerial compensation. Thus, economists say, the free market restrains stockholders from starving their CEOs.

Question: What ensures that CEOs won't starve their stockholders by chewing up the value of the firm in gala parties, self-aggrandizing promotional schemes, and acquisitions of expensive art?

Answer: According to economists, managers will be disciplined by what is called the market for corporate control. The market distinguishes good and bad sets of stockholders. Good ones strike a happy medium between wringing all possible profits out of a company and keeping their CEOs happy. Bad ones, through inattention or ineptitude, allow their executives to divert profits from dividends into fancy Bokhara rugs for their offices. These stockholders, the argument goes, won't remain stockholders very long. Raiders will spot a flabby company, ripe for takeover, and buy it out from under them. In this way good managers will eventually replace bad managers, and everyone but the bad managers will be the better for it. There's no need to worry about management, in short, because the market for corporate control will take care of it.

Question: Does the market for corporate control work?

Answer: It's hard to prove that U.S. companies would have done better under alternative management. But the erosion of the American share of the market in automobiles, consumer electronics, machine tools, photocopiers, semiconductors, steel, and textiles suggests an answer. If this answer is correct—that the country's managerial elite has been asleep at the wheel—then many economists would say that the current flood of mergers and takeovers and leveraged buyouts is a marvelous thing. It's just the free market washing away those greedy and inefficient executives—and good riddance! Come on, good managers! It's about time you showed up! Take your seats at the head of the table!

Question: What if the good managers we end up with are all Japanese?

The Macroeconomic Situation

THE PAST THREE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS were won by candidates who proclaimed that the United States has few problems—indeed, the candidates derided their opponents as compulsive nay-sayers. Although economics is hardly a profession dominated by wild-eyed left-wingers, it is not easy to find economists who wholeheartedly accept this sunny assessment. Whatever their views of the future of the world economy, mainstream economists tend to think that the United States needs to get its house in order. Most agree with Thurow that the macroeconomic situation, the education given to workers, and management practices are not what they need to be if America is to reverse its productivity slowdown and compete successfully in today's global market. Where economists disagree, sometimes vehemently, is on the importance of each factor, and the remedies to be adopted. Not all accept Thurow's argument that management is the center of the problem.

The "macroeconomic situation" means, chiefly, that it is not now easy for businesses to invest. If a company

wants to modernize a factory, it almost always has to borrow money, usually by approaching a bank or by issuing bonds. In either case it must pay interest—sometimes quite a bit of interest. The higher the cost, the more difficult it is to justify the investment. Right now it is more expensive to invest in the United States than it is to invest in Europe or Japan. Exact figures are hard to come by. Dale Jorgenson, an economist at Harvard who has gained a reputation for his study of the question, thinks that the difference in the cost of capital in the United States and in Japan was as much as 25 percent in 1985—such a huge difference that it alone is the single most important cause of America's relative disadvantage. Foreign banks will eventually catch on, he says, and invade the U.S. market.

Crudely speaking, money costs more in this country because there isn't enough of it available to private investors. Americans save much less of their incomes than other peoples do; as a result, banks have less to lend. Last summer, Commerce Department figures show, the American personal-savings rate was 5.1 percent, meaning that the nation saved a nickel of every dollar of disposable income; in Japan the savings rate for 1988, the most recent figure available from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, was 15.2 percent. With Americans not putting much in the bank, American banks have less money to lend.

Alas, Americans seem unconvinced of the connection between savings and investment. According to a study released last spring by the Public Agenda Foundation, a nonpartisan research organization with which Thurow is involved, Americans think that saving is bad for the economy, because they believe money in bank accounts just sits there. Indeed, much of the citizenry has picked up the erroneous notion that too much saving triggered the Great Depression. Even those who do believe that people should save more think of it as a means to avoid spending on foreign products. Such thinking gives little encouragement to hopes that the savings rate will increase.

Investment is also affected by that favored economic bugbear the federal deficit. A certain exasperation comes into Thurow's voice when he talks of the deficits run up during the Reagan years. The chief trouble with the federal deficit, he says, is that it forces the government to raise money by issuing bonds. The bonds soak up much of the relatively small amount of available money, which leaves business fighting for the scraps. With everyone scrabbling for a slice of a pie that was small to begin with, the average interest rate—that is, the price of money—goes up, which means that somebody who wants to borrow money to build a new factory has to shell out a lot more in the United States than he would in a country with a smaller budget deficit.

Later Thurow says, "If there ever was a year to begin the process of balancing the federal budget, it was 1989,

because 1990 is an election year, and 1991 and 1992 is the run-up to the next presidential election. If there was *ever* a year to do it, it was 1989—and we didn't make an iota of progress." According to some estimates, the 1989 deficit will be \$161 billion, \$89 billion over the Gramm-Rudman target, a big problem but not, in the context of the entire U.S. economy, a lot of money. A relatively small increase in savings could offset many of its harmful effects; a relatively small tax increase could eliminate the deficit altogether—without, Thurow believes, hurting the U.S. standard of living. "Here is a case," Thurow says, "where the establishment has got to belly up and tell the American people why taxes need to go up or expenditures come down. I'm a Democrat, but even the most hard-nosed Republican would agree with that. Instead, you have the President absolutely abdicating his responsibility to educate the people. My God, if we can't deal with the simple problems—and believe me, the deficit is a simple problem—what are we going to do about the hard ones, like education?"

How to Fix Our Schools

VERY FEW ECONOMISTS—AFTER ALL, ECONOMISTS tend to work in schools—would dispute that the educational system in this country is in a parlous condition; in an increasingly technological world, they would agree, a country with an underskilled, undereducated work force is at a significant disadvantage. In his many speeches and interviews Thurow likes to cite the advanced IBM computer-chip factory in Burlington, Vermont, which he says has two main parts: a chip-making facility and a school in which all 7,500 workers are taught the eighth-grade mathematics necessary to make the chips. "If IBM has to teach Algebra I and Algebra II," he told ABC News, "then the price of IBM semiconductor chips has to include the cost of teaching Algebra I and Algebra II. If Hitachi makes the same chips and they don't have to teach Algebra I and Algebra II, because the kids have already learned it in high school, then Hitachi chips are cheaper than IBM chips and IBM goes out of business."

(As it happens, this story exemplifies a common complaint about Thurow—that he is willing to be sloppy about the facts in the pursuit of a good point. Few economists would disagree with the thrust of his argument, but Paul Bergevin, an IBM spokesman, says that the story just ain't so. In all, less than a third of the plant's employees attend the school. "If you're dealing with advanced technology and your trigonometry is rusty," he says, "it's natural to want to brush up." Thurow's repeated exaggeration, he complains, "makes it sound like we hired unqualified people." IBM worries about the decline in American education, Bergevin says, but Burlington is not an example of the problem.)

Thurow has given his answer to the question of How

to Fix Our Schools often enough that it has acquired a high gloss and perhaps should be called a shtick. The shtick goes something like this:

Every country has problems that its inhabitants regard as intractable but that foreigners can't believe it has trouble resolving. In Japan, for example, it's housing. One of the richest countries in the world—but the people live in dumps! Expensive dumps! Even more incredible, despite this critical housing shortage, one tenth of Tokyo prefecture is still farmland! The problem is not Japan's population density. Holland has a greater population density than Japan, but the Dutch live in beautiful houses! They're small by our standards, but they're very nice houses. You ask the Japanese what the problem is, and they'll give you a big song and dance about the value of rice, small farmers, and so on—and then they throw up their hands. (Thurow demonstrates with a gesture.) Now, an American would go in there and say, This is crazy—sell the farms! After all, we don't have farms in Manhattan anymore!

The same thing is true for education in the United States (Thurow continues). We have a 30 percent dropout rate. Nobody else in the developed world has anything like that many dropouts. But talk to people here about education, and they start talking about 15,000 local school boards, intractable unions, parental control—and they throw up their hands! You know what a Korean would do? He would come here and say: Shut down the schools for a week in February, during which you administer a very hard exam to every high school senior. Explain to the students that if they don't pass they won't get a chance to go to college. Because that's what they do in Korea! Where the dropout rate is maybe half a percent!

Okay, how long (Thurow pops out his hands like long white asterisks on either side of his face) do you think it would take to improve those test scores if we did that? About twenty-seven microseconds! Bingo—I've just solved the school crisis!

Now, this solution is known in the trade as Holding a Gun to Their Heads. If nothing else, it proves that Thurow is an economist, because only an economist would suggest that a country filled with people who are convinced that the federal government is teaching their children vile things (evolution, sex, and religion, to name three) would advocate giving control over education to the federal government. Indeed, when pressed, Thurow will admit that a national exam is unlikely in the near future. What will have to happen, he thinks, is that private businesses will have to inform local governments that they will move unless the schools get better. (In Anacosta, one recalls, the copper company took an interest in Thurow's high school.) But for companies to do that, he says, managers will have to take a broader view of their responsibilities than they now do. They will have to begin to act like capitalists.

Fear of Failing

ALFRED P. SLOAN, WHO FOUNDED THE BUSINESS school that Thurow now runs, did not want to produce a carbon copy of Harvard Business School, down the way. He wanted to endow a school that would *not* teach students the Harvard way. The education at Harvard, the leading business school, was and is based on something known as the case method: Faculty members search out the companies that are doing the best in their fields, and teach students what these firms are doing right. Because most of the students' future employers will not be as well managed as the leaders, the students will probably be hired by firms that find these lessons important and useful.

The case method has obvious merit, but it is not without pitfalls. If, for example, every company in the United States is doing something wrong, the lessons will incorporate these systemic problems. Although Thurow would be the last to pick specifically on Harvard, his alma mater, clearly he thinks that many business schools need to reconsider their curricula. By concentrating on finance, these schools have bred a generation of experts in finance, where what is needed is a generation of experts in the practical application of technology. The American steel industry was undone twenty years ago by financial experts who took far too long to appreciate the value of innovative oxygen furnaces and continuous casting processes. Instead, the managers of the companies blanched at the expenditures necessary to retool factories. Ultimately, with the survival of the industry at stake, they had to do it anyway, but steel is still trying to recover. It is Thurow's hope that the students he is bringing along at MIT will have the mysteries of production and technology drilled into them until these are second nature.

Just as important, he says, is steeping them in the hot brew of capitalism, and begetting a few old-style capitalists. Capitalists, in Thurow's lexicon, are the empire-builders who built up huge companies, and whose fates were inextricably tied to their creations. Locked in place, the Henry Fords and Thomas J. Watsons of the past had to produce cheaper and better to stay in business. They couldn't sell out, even if they wanted to; dumping their stock would simply depress its price. More important, they didn't *want* to sell out. Their prestige was bound up with their corporations.

Many of them, Thurow concedes, had the singular rapacity of the self-made rich. But they built great institutions—they had to, if they were going to survive—and these institutions pushed the United States to global leadership.

Such capitalists still exist—Kenneth Olsen, of Digital Equipment Corporation, is one of Thurow's favorite examples. But most companies today are owned by financial institutions like mutual funds. By law, such funds have to look out solely for the interests of their investors—they must always have the best return available for an immediate sale. By law, these institutions cannot approve of a manager's betting the company on a new product, as Henry Ford did when he pushed the development of the Model A. By law, they must make money by watching the squiggles of the stock market.

As all the world knows by now, American managers have been forced to make the immediate return on investment their first priority, with the price of a share of stock second. (In contrast, one poll of Japanese executives found evidence that on a scale of concerns that ran from 0 to 10, share price was 0.1.) Reflecting these concerns, corporate pay often depends on current profits, not long-term performance. Everyone makes more money, but profits become disconnected from production. The age is increasingly characterized by the ascendance of the speculator. Whereas Fred Trump, the father of the renowned Donald, made his fortune in the 1950s and 1960s as an old-style-capitalist builder—he erected middle-class housing throughout Brooklyn and Queens—his son quickly discovered that there was more money to be made in the 1970s and 1980s with casino gambling and stock-market manipulations such as bidding for a company in order to drive up its stock price. To avoid losing ground in the market for corporate control—to avoid having the next generation of managers come exclusively from Europe and Japan—the country is going to have to do better than that.

Oddly, Thurow says, the business elite has been led astray by that old friend the profit motive. Profit-maxi-

*My God, if we can't deal
with the simple problems—and
believe me, the deficit is
a simple problem—what are we
going to do about the hard ones,
like education?*

mizing, as he puts it, has not led to output-maximizing. A host of regulatory changes—in antitrust laws; interest payments; Thurow will list them for you at the drop of a hat—could make it easier for managers to become capitalists. But none of this effort will mean much, he says, if the effort is not accompanied by a change of heart.

A Change of Heart?

LESTER THUROW HAS A NICE OFFICE THAT OVERLOOKS a reasonably scenic section of the Charles River. From his windows he can survey the tall, anonymous buildings in Boston's downtown and Back Bay. Three floors below rushes a steady flow of traffic on Memorial Drive. In Cambridge that traffic runs heavily to vintage Volvos and Volkswagen Beetles. A surprising number of these cars flash by with a bumper sticker that is one of Thurow's pet peeves. The sticker says QUESTION AUTHORITY, and it irritates Thurow no end.

QUESTION AUTHORITY means don't place your trust in experts and elected politicians. Thurow regards this as at best a recipe for quietism and at worst a kind of tyranny of the cretinous. In his view, an enlightened elite is, essential to the functioning of a democracy. The citizenry is unlikely to know how best to deal with, say, the ozone hole over the Antarctic. It has to trust that its scientists and political leaders have sufficient devotion to the commonweal to choose a course of action that is fair and effective. QUESTION AUTHORITY says they won't. One of the great problems of this nation, Thurow believes, is the disintegration of the elite occasioned by Vietnam, Watergate, and the variegated problems of the 1960s and 1970s, and the fact that for some time now people have been quite right to QUESTION AUTHORITY.

In the long run, he thinks, business leaders need to learn the difference between an oligarchy and an establishment. "Both," he reminds his listener, "are groups of well-connected rich people who marry each other and run the country. The difference between an establishment and an oligarchy is that an establishment says, 'I'm interested in the long-run success of my country, and I am personally confident that if my country succeeds, I will succeed.' An oligarchy is intrinsically insecure and has got to have secret Swiss bank accounts, because they're sure that the world is going to fall apart tomorrow and they won't get their share, and therefore they'd better have their money in a Swiss bank account. Now, in some sense every country depends on having an establishment that can persuade the citizens of that country to do the things that are good for it in the long run, even though they may hurt a little bit in the short run."

It is not like Thurow to pause—usually he speaks in a steady stream of orderly sentences that stops abruptly at a conclusion—but he pauses now. He has been asked how he hopes his students will be different from the run

of business people today, and he is thinking about his answer. In the morning light it is possible to see that his hair is thinning a little up top. He looks a bit tired, as usual, though since his trip to Gasherbrum II (snowfall kept the expedition 600 feet below the summit) he has eased back on his training. Outside the window a persistent lunatic is actually trying to get in some October fishing.

Finally Thurow smiles, an engaging reflex, and says, "Some countries seem to consistently have an establishment, and others consistently have oligarchies. In the United States we bounce back and forth. The Founding Fathers were an establishment. The group of people after World War II that ran the country was an establishment. In the 1920s we had an oligarchy. And I think the historians are going to say in the 1980s we had an oligarchy. The question is, What are we going to have in the 1990s? In a place like this we would like to be training people who want to join an establishment as opposed to training people who want to join an oligarchy." It is a measure of the times that creating an establishment can seem like a revolutionary goal.

In Thurow's office is a small pile of newspapers, their financial pages crammed with the doings of the men (they are almost all men) Thurow might regard as this nation's equivalent of Latin American oligarchs. All will let the boat run aground while they fight for the best seat—a course neither in their own best interests nor in anyone else's. To select from a long list: Henry Kravis, whose firm, KKR, made the first leveraged buyout worth more than \$100 million, transforming Houdaille Industries from a world-class machine-tool company into a basket case, at great profit to its executives; Donald Trump, who tried to buy American Airlines with the argument that management had cheated stockholders by aggressively modernizing its aging fleet of planes; Michael Milken, now indicted, whose self-serving high projections of companies' potential earnings led to widespread financial hugger-mugger that now seems to be running sour, at terrible cost to almost everyone but Milken; politicians who trade on their respected names to make commercials for hotels or who allow themselves to be rented by Japanese combines; the hundreds of savings-and-loan managers who diverted depositors' money into art collections, personal jets, and real-estate deals—the list is dispiriting to those who look to the nation's elite for serious thinking about the challenges facing the United States.

"If you'd think about our chances for three seconds," Thurow likes to say, "you'd realize the country doesn't stand a chance. On the other hand . . ." He smiles, shrugs charmingly; a wordless confession of optimism. Thurow thinks things will come out for the better, not because he is a congenital optimist, although he is, but because he must. Any other attitude would foredoom the nation, at least in his mind, to failure. Any other attitude would close off the possibility of a change of heart. □



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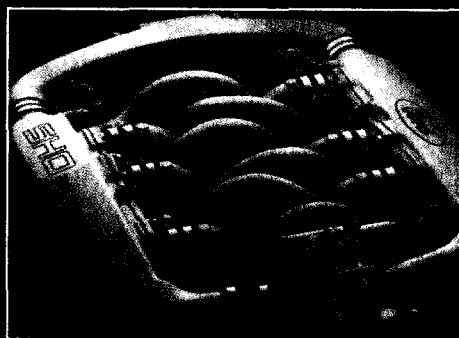
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A Short Story



Pictures of the Ice

by Alice Munro

THREE WEEKS BEFORE HE DIED—DROWNED IN a boating accident in a lake whose name nobody had heard him mention—Austin Cobbett stood deep in the clasp of a three-way mirror in Crawford's Men's Wear, in Logan, Ontario, looking at himself in a burgundy sports shirt and a pair of cream, brown, and burgundy plaid pants. Both pants and shirt permanent press.

"Listen to me," Jerry Crawford said to him, "with the darker shirt and the lighter pants you can't go wrong. It's youthful."

Austin cackled. "Did you ever hear that expression—mutton dressed as lamb?"

"Referred to ladies," Jerry said. "Anyway, it's all changed now. There's no old-men's clothes, no old-ladies' clothes, anymore. Style applies to everybody."

Once Austin got used to what he had on, Jerry was going to talk him into a neck scarf of complementary colors and a cream pullover. Austin needed all the cover-up he could get. Since his wife had died, about a year ago, and they had finally got a new minister at the United Church (Austin, who was over seventy, was officially retired but had been hanging on and filling in while they haggled over whom to hire as a replacement and what they would pay him), he had lost weight, his muscles had shrunk, and he was getting the pot-bellied, caved-in shape of an old man. His neck was corded and his nose lengthened and his cheeks drooped; he was a stringy old rooster—stringy but tough, and game enough to gear up for a second marriage.

"The pants are going to have to be taken in," Jerry said. "You can give us time for that, can't you? When's the big day?"

Austin was going to be married in Hawaii, where his wife-to-be lived. He named a date a couple of weeks ahead.

Phil Stadelman, from the Toronto Dominion Bank, came in then and did not recognize Austin from the back,

though Austin was his former minister. He'd never seen Cobbett in clothes like that.

Phil told his AIDS joke; Jerry couldn't stop him.

Why did the Newfie put condoms on his ears?

Because he didn't want to get hearing aids.

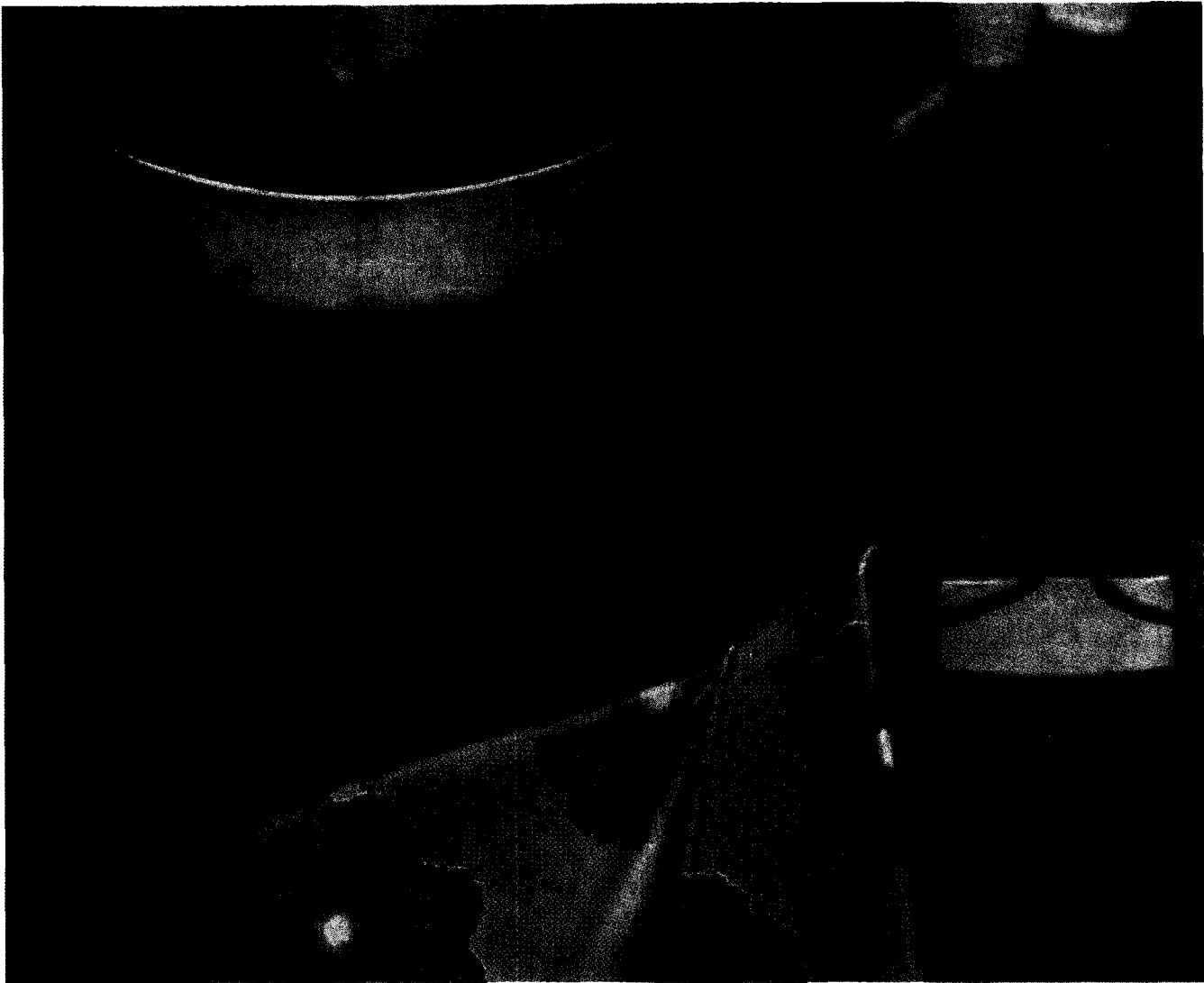
Then Austin turned around, and instead of saying, *Well, I don't know about you fellows but I find it hard to think of AIDS as a laughing matter, or, I wonder what kind of jokes they tell in Newfoundland about the folks from Huron County?* he said, "That's rich." He laughed.

That's rich. Then he asked Phil's opinion of his clothes. "Do you think they're going to laugh when they see me coming, in Hawaii?"

KARIN HEARD ABOUT THIS WHEN SHE WENT INTO Logan's most crowded doughnut place to drink a cup of coffee, after finishing her afternoon stint as a crossing guard. She sat at the counter and heard the men talking at a table behind her. She swung around on the stool and said, "Listen, I could have told you, he's changed. I see him every day and I could have told you."

Karin is a tall, thin woman with rough skin and a hoarse voice and long blonde hair, dark for a couple of inches at the roots. She's letting it grow out, and it's gotten to where she could cut it short, but she doesn't. She used to be a lanky blonde girl, shy and pretty, who rode around on the back of her husband's motorcycle. She has gone a little strange—not too much so, or she wouldn't be a crossing guard, not even on the strength of Austin Cobbett's recommendation. She interrupts conversations. She never seems to wear anything but her jeans and an old navy-blue duffle coat. She has a hard and suspicious expression, and she has a public grudge against her ex-husband. She will write things on his car with her finger. *Fake Christian. Kiss arse Phony. Brent Duprey is a snake.* Nobody knows that she is the one who wrote

Austin, his parish believed, was going to retire to Hawaii, with a new wife and wardrobe. But life, as he liked to say, has its surprises



Lazarus Sucks, because she went back (she does her writing at night) and rubbed it off with her sleeve. Why? It seemed dangerous, something that might get her into trouble—the trouble being of a vaguely supernatural kind, not a talk with the chief of police—and she has nothing against Lazarus in the Bible, only against Lazarus House, which is the place Brent runs, and where he lives now.

Karin lives where she and Brent lived together for the last few months—upstairs over the hardware store, at the back, in a big room with an alcove (the baby's) and a kitchen at one end. She spends a lot of her time over at Austin's, cleaning out his house, getting everything ready for his departure to Hawaii. The house he lives in, still, is the old parsonage, on Pondicherry Street. The church has built the new minister a new house, quite nice, with a patio and a double garage—ministers' wives often work now, as nurses or teachers, and then you need two cars. The old parsonage is a grayish-white brick house, with blue-painted trim on the veranda and the gables. It needs a lot of work: insulating, sandblasting, new paint, new

window frames, new tiles in the bathroom. Walking back to her own place at night, Karin sometimes thinks about what she'd do to that place, if it were hers and she had the money.

AUSTIN SHOWS HER A PICTURE OF SHEILA BROTHERS, the woman he is to marry. Actually it's a picture of three people: Austin, the woman who used to be his wife, and Sheila Brothers, in front of a log building and some pine trees. A retreat, where he—they—first met Sheila. Austin has his minister's black shirt and turned collar on; he looks shifty, with his apologetic, ministerial smile. His wife is looking away from him, but the big bow of her flowered scarf flutters against his neck. Fluffy white hair, trim figure. Chic. Sheila Brothers—Mrs. Brothers, a widow—is looking straight ahead, and she is the only one who seems really cheerful. She has short fair hair, combed around her face in a businesslike way, brown slacks, a white sweat shirt, with the fairly large bumps of her breasts and stomach

plain to see; she meets the camera head-on, and doesn't seem worried about what it will make of her.

"She looks happy," Karin says.

"Well. She didn't know she was going to marry me, at the time."

He shows Karin a postcard picture of the town where Sheila lives, the town where he will live, in Hawaii. Also a photograph of her house. The town's main street has a row of palm trees down the middle; it has low white or pinkish buildings, lampposts with brimming flower baskets, and over all a sky of deep turquoise in which the town's name—a Hawaiian name no one can pronounce or remember—is written in flowing letters like silk ribbon. The name floating in the sky looks as real as anything else in the picture. As for the house, you can hardly make it out at all—just a bit of balcony among the red and pink and gold flowering trees and bushes. But the beach is there in front of the house, the sand as pure as cream and the jewel-bright waves breaking. This is where Austin Cobbett will walk with friendly Sheila. No wonder he needs all new clothes.

AUSTIN WANTS KARIN TO CLEAR EVERYTHING out. Even his books, his old typewriter, the pictures of his wife and children. His son lives in Denver, his daughter in Montreal. He has written to them, he has talked to them on the phone, he has asked them to claim anything they want. His son wants the dining-room furniture, which a moving truck will pick up next week. His daughter says she doesn't want anything. (Karin thinks she's likely to reconsider; people always want *something*.) All the furniture, books, pictures, curtains, rugs, dishes, pots and pans, are to go to the Auction Barn. Austin's car will be auctioned as well, along with his power mower and the snowblower his son gave him last Christmas. Everything will be sold after Austin leaves for Hawaii, and the money will go to Lazarus House. Austin started Lazarus House, when he was a minister. Only he didn't call it that; he called it Turn-around House. Now they have decided—Brent Duprey has decided—they'd rather have a name that is more religious, more Christian.

At first Austin was going to give them all these things, to use in or around Lazarus House. Then he thought that he would be showing more respect if he gave them money, to buy things they liked, instead of using his wife's dishes and sitting on his wife's chintz sofa.

"What if they take the money and buy lottery tickets with it?" Karin asks him. "Won't they be tempted?"

"You don't get anywhere in life without temptations," Austin says, with his maddening little smile. "What if they *won* the lottery?"

"Brent Duprey is a snake."

Brent has taken control of Lazarus House. It was a place to stay for people who wanted to stop drinking or

some other troublesome way of life; now it's a born-again sort of place, with night-long sessions of praying and singing and groaning and confessing. That's how Brent got hold of it—by becoming more religious than Austin. Austin got Brent to stop drinking; he pulled and pulled on Brent until he pulled him right out of the life he was leading and into a new life of running this house with money from the church, and the government, and so on, and he made a big mistake, Austin did, in thinking he could hold Brent there. Once started on the holy road, Brent went shooting on past. He got past Austin's careful, quiet kind of religion in no time and cut Austin out with the people in his own church who wanted a stricter, more ferocious kind of Christianity. Austin was shifted out of Lazarus House and the church at about the same time, and Brent bossed the new minister around without difficulty. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, Austin wants to give Lazarus House the money.

"Who's to say whether Brent's way isn't closer to God than mine is, after all?" he says.

Karin says just about anything to anybody now. She says to Austin, "Don't make me puke."

Austin says she must be sure to keep a record of her time, so that she will be paid for all this work, and also, if she sees anything here she would particularly like, to tell him, so that they can discuss it.

"Within reason," he says. "If you said you'd like the car or the snowblower, I guess I'd be obliged to say no, because that would be cheating the folks over at Lazarus House. But how about the vacuum cleaner?"

Is that how he sees her—as somebody who's always thinking about cleaning houses? The vacuum cleaner is practically an antique, anyway.

"I bet I know what Brent said when you told him I was going to be in charge of all this," she says. "I bet he said, Are you going to get a lawyer to check up on her? He did, didn't he?"

Instead of answering that, Austin says, "Why would I trust a lawyer any more than I trust you?"

"Is that what you said to him?"

"I'm saying it to you. You either trust or you don't trust, in my opinion. When you decide you're going to trust, you have to start where you are."

Austin rarely mentions God. Nevertheless, you feel the mention of God hovering on the edge of sentences like these, and it makes you so uneasy—Karin gets a crumbly feeling along her spine—that you wish he'd say it and get it over with.

FOUR YEARS AGO KARIN AND BRENT WERE STILL married, and they hadn't had the baby yet or moved to their place above the hardware store. They were living in a cheap apartment building belonging to Morris Fordyce that had at one time been a slaughterhouse. In wet weather Karin could smell pig,

and always she smelled another smell that she thought was blood. Brent sniffed around the walls, and got down and sniffed the floor, but he couldn't smell what she was smelling. How could he smell anything other than the clouds of boozy breath that rose from his own gut? Brent was a drunk then, but not a sodden drunk. He played hockey on the O.T. (over-thirty, old-timers) hockey team—he was quite a bit older than Karin—and he claimed that he had never played sober. He worked for Fordyce Construction for a while, and then he worked for the town, cutting up trees. He drank on the job when he could, and after work he drank at the Fish and Game Club or at the Green Haven Motel Bar, called the Greasy Heaven. One night he started up a bulldozer that was sitting outside the Greasy Heaven and drove it across town to the Fish and Game Club. Of course he was caught, and charged with impaired driving of a bulldozer—a big joke all over town. But nobody who laughed at the joke came around to pay the fine. And Brent just kept getting wilder. Another night he took down the stairs that led to their apartment. He didn't bash the steps out in a fit of temper; he removed them thoughtfully and methodically, steps and uprights, one by one, backing downstairs as he did so, and leaving Karin cursing at the top. First she laughed at him—she had had a few beers herself by that time. Then, when she realized he was in earnest and she was being marooned, she started cursing. Cowardly neighbors peeped out of the doors behind him.

Brent came home the next afternoon and was amazed, or pretended to be. What happened to the steps? he yelled. He stomped around the hall, his lined, exhausted face working, his blue eyes snapping, his smile innocent and conniving. God damn that Morris. Goddamn steps caved in. I'm going to sue him. God damn *fuck*. Karin was upstairs, with nothing to eat but half a box of Rice Krispies, no milk, and a can of yellow beans. She had thought of phoning somebody to come with a ladder, but she was too mad and stubborn. If Brent wanted to starve her, she would show him. She would starve.

That time was the beginning of the end, the change. Brent went around to see Morris Fordyce, to beat him up and tell him about how he was going to be sued, and Morris talked to Brent in a reasonable, sobering way, until Brent decided not to sue or beat up Morris but to commit suicide instead. Morris called Austin Cobbett, because Austin had a reputation for knowing how to deal with people who were in a desperate way. Austin didn't talk Brent out of drinking, or into the church, but he did talk him out of suicide. Then, a couple of years later, when the baby died, Austin was the only minister they knew to call. By the time he came to see them, to talk about the funeral, Brent had drunk everything in the house and had gone out looking for more. Austin went after him and spent the next five days—with a brief time out for burying the baby—just staying with him on a bender. He spent the next week nursing him out of it,

and the next month talking to him or sitting with him until Brent decided he would not drink anymore, that he had been put in touch with God. Austin said that Brent meant that he had been put in touch with the fullness of his own life and the power of his innermost self. Brent said it was God.

Karin went to Austin's church with Brent for a while; she didn't mind that. She could see, though, that the church wasn't going to be enough to hold Brent. She saw him bouncing up to sing the hymns, swinging his arms and clenching his fists, his whole body primed. He was the same as he was after three or four beers, when he couldn't stop himself from going for more. He was bursting. Soon he burst out of Austin's hold, and took a good part of the church with him. A lot of people had wanted that loosening, more noise and praying and singing, and not so much quiet persuading, talking. They'd been wanting it for a long while.

None of it surprised her. She wasn't surprised that Brent learned to fill out papers and make the right impression and get government money, that he took over Turnaround House and kicked Austin out. He'd always been full of possibilities. She wasn't really surprised that he got as mad at her now for drinking one beer and smoking one cigarette as he used to do when she wanted to stop partying and go to bed at two o'clock. He said he was giving her a week to decide. No more drinking, no more smoking, Christ as her savior. One week. Karin said, Don't bother with the week. After Brent was gone, she quit smoking, she almost quit drinking, and she also quit going to Austin's church. She gave up everything but a slow, smoldering grudge against Brent, which grew and grew. One day Austin stopped her on the street, and she thought he was going to say some gentle, personal, condemning thing to her, because of her grudge or her quitting church, but all he did was ask her to come and help him look after his wife, who was getting home from the hospital that week.

AUSTIN IS TALKING ON THE PHONE TO HIS DAUGHTER in Montreal. Her name is Megan. She is around thirty, unmarried, a television producer. "Life has a lot of surprises up its sleeve," Austin says. "You know this has nothing to do with your mother. This is a new life, entirely. But I regret. No, no. I just mean you can love God in more than one way, and taking pleasure in the world is surely one of them. That's a revelation that's come to me rather late. Too late to be of any use to your mother. No. Guilt is a sin and a seduction. I've said that to many a poor soul who liked to wallow in it. Regret's another matter. How could you get through a long life and escape it?"

I was right, Karin is thinking, Megan does want something. But after a little more talk—Austin says that he might take up golf, don't laugh, and that Sheila belongs

to a play-reading club; he expects he'll be a star at that, after all his pulpit haranguing—the conversation ends. Austin walks out to the kitchen—the phone is in the front hall; this is an old-fashioned house—and looks up at Karin, who is cleaning out the high cupboards.

"Parents and children, Karin," he says, sighing, sighing, looking humorous. "Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we—have children. Then they always want us to be the same, they want us to be parents. They are shaken up dreadfully if we do anything they didn't think we'd do. Dreadfully."

"I guess she'll get used to it," Karin says, without much sympathy.

"Oh, she will, she will. Poor Megan."

Then he says he's going uptown to have his hair cut. He doesn't want to postpone it any longer because he always looks and feels so foolish with a fresh haircut. His mouth turns down as he smiles—first up, then down. That downward slide is what's noticeable on him everywhere—face slipping down into neck wattles, chest emptied out and mounded into that abrupt, queer little belly. The flow has left dry channels, deep lines. Yet Austin speaks—perversely—as if out of a body that was light and ready and a pleasure to carry around.

In a short time the phone rings again, and Karin has to climb down and answer it.

"Karin? Is that you, Karin? It's Megan!"

"Your father's just gone up to get a haircut."

"Good. Good. I'm glad. That gives me a chance to talk to you. I've been hoping I'd get a chance to talk to you."

"Oh," Karin says.

"Karin. Now, listen. I know I'm behaving just the way adult children seem always to behave in this situation. I don't like it. I don't like that in myself. But I can't help it. I'm suspicious. I wonder what's going on. Is he all right? What do you think of it? What do you think of this woman he's going to marry?"

"All I ever saw of her is her picture," Karin says.

"I am terribly busy right now, and I can't just drop everything and come home and have a real heart-to-heart with him. Anyway, he's very difficult to talk to. He makes all the right noises, he seems so open, but in reality he's very closed. He's never been at all a personal kind of person, do you know what I mean? He's never done anything before for a *personal* kind of reason. He always did things *for* somebody. He always liked to find people who *needed* things done for them, a lot. Well, you know that. Even bringing you into the house, you know, to look after Mother—it wasn't exactly for Mother's sake or his sake he did that."

Karin can picture Megan—the long, dark, smooth hair, parted in the middle and combed over her shoulders, the heavily made-up eyes and tanned skin and pale-pink lip-sticked mouth, the handsomely clothed, plump body. Wouldn't her voice bring such looks to mind even if you'd never seen her? Such smoothness, such rich sincer-

ity. A fine gloss on every word, and little appreciative spaces in between. She talks as if listening to herself. A little too much that way, really. Could she be drunk?

"Let's face it, Karin, Mother was a snob." Yes, she is drunk. "Well, she had to have something. Dragged around from one dump to another, always doing good. Doing good wasn't her thing at all. So now, *now*, he gives it all up, he's off to the easy life. In Hawaii! Isn't it bizarre?"

Bizarre. Karin has heard that word on television and heard people, mostly teenagers, say it, and she knows it is not the church bazaar that Megan's talking about. Nevertheless, that's what the word makes her think of—the church bazaars that Megan's mother used to organize, always trying to give them some style and make things different. Striped umbrellas and a sidewalk café one year, Devonshire teas and a rose arbor the next. Then she thinks of Megan's mother on the chintz-covered sofa in the living room, weak and yellow after her chemotherapy, one of those padded, perky kerchiefs around her nearly bald head. Still, she could look up at Karin with faint, formal surprise when Karin came into the room. *Was there something you wanted, Karin?* The thing that Karin was supposed to ask her, she would ask Karin.

Bizarre. Bazaar. Snob. When Megan got in that dig, Karin should have said, at least, "I know that." All she can think to say is, "Megan. This is costing you money."

"Money, Karin! We're talking about my *father*. We're talking about whether my father is sane or whether he has flipped his wig, Karin!"

A DAY LATER A CALL FROM DENVER. DON, Austin's son, is calling to tell his father that they should forget about the dining-room furniture; the cost of shipping it is too high. Austin agrees with him. The money could be better spent, he says. What's furniture? Then Austin is called upon to explain about the Auction Barn and what Karin is doing.

"Of course, of course, no trouble," he says. "They'll list everything they get and what it sold for. They can easily send a copy. They've got a computer, I understand. No longer the Dark Ages up here."

Austin listens to Don and then he says, "That's true. I had hoped you'd see it that way about the money. It's a project close to my heart. And you and your sister are providing well for yourselves. I'm very fortunate in my children."

He listens some more. "The old-age pension and my own pension, whatever more could I want? And this lady, this lady, I can tell you, Sheila—she is not short of money, if I can put it that way." He laughs, rather mischievously, at something his son says.

After he hangs up, he says to Karin, "Well, my son is worried about my finances and my daughter is worried about my mental state. My mental-emotional state. The



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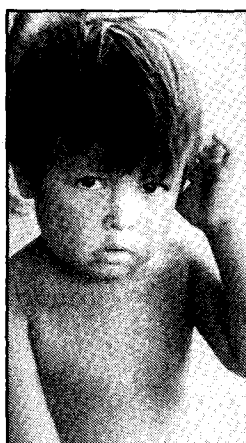
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male and female ways of looking at things. The male and female ways of expressing anxiety. Underneath, it's the same thing. The old order changeth, yielding place to the new."

Don wouldn't remember everything that was in the house anyway. How could he? He was here the day of the funeral, but his wife wasn't with him, she was too pregnant to come. He wouldn't have her to rely on. Men don't remember that sort of thing well. He just asked for the list so that he would seem to be keeping track of everything, and nobody better try to hoodwink him. Or hoodwink his father.

Karin is going to get some things from the house, and nobody need know where she has gotten them. Nobody comes up to her place anyway. A willow-pattern plate. The blue-and-gray flowered curtains. A little fat jug of ruby-colored glass with a silver lid. A white damask cloth, a tablecloth, that she ironed until it shone like a frosted snowfield, and the enormous napkins that go with it. The tablecloth alone weighs as much as a child, and the napkins flop out of wineglasses like lilies—if you have wineglasses. She has already taken home six silver spoons, in her coat pocket. She knows enough not to disturb the silver tea service or the good dishes. But some pink glass dishes for dessert, with long stems, have caught her eye. She can see her place transformed, with these things in it. More than that, she can feel the quiet and contentment they would extend to her. Sitting in a room so furnished, she wouldn't need to go out. She would never need to think of Brent and imagine ways to torment him. A person sitting in such a room could turn and floor anybody trying to intrude. *Was there something you wanted?*

ON MONDAY OF AUSTIN'S LAST WEEK—HE IS SUPPOSED TO fly to Hawaii on Saturday—the first big storm of the winter began. The wind came in from the west, over the lake, and the snow blew furiously all day and night. Monday and Tuesday the schools were closed, so Karin didn't have to work as a guard. But she couldn't stand staying indoors. She put on her duffle coat, wrapped her head and half her face in a wool scarf, and plowed through the snow-filled streets to the parsonage.

The house is cold; the wind is coming in around the doors and windows. In the kitchen cupboard along the west wall the dishes feel like ice. Austin is dressed but lying down on the living-room sofa, wrapped in various quilts and blankets. He is not reading or watching television or dozing, so far as she can tell—just staring. She makes him a cup of instant coffee.

"Do you think this'll stop by Saturday?" she says. She has the feeling that if he doesn't go Saturday, he may not go at all—the whole thing could be called off, all plans could falter.

"It'll stop in due time," he says. "I'm not worried."

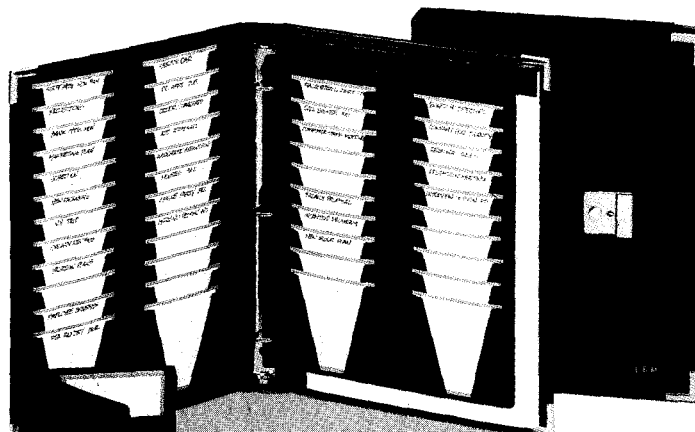
Karin's baby died in a snowstorm. In the afternoon, when Brent was drinking with his friend Rob and watching television, Karin said that the baby was sick and she needed money for a taxi to take him to the hospital. Brent told her to fuck off. He thought she was just trying to bother him. And partly she was—the baby had thrown up only once, and whimpered, and he didn't seem very hot. Then, about suppertime, with Rob gone, Brent went to pick up the baby and play with him, forgetting that he was sick. This baby's like a hot coal, he yelled at Karin, and wanted to know why she hadn't called the doctor, why she hadn't taken the baby to the hospital. You tell me why, Karin said, and they started to fight. You said he didn't need to go, Karin said. Okay, so he doesn't need to go. Brent called the taxi company, but the taxis weren't going out because of the storm, which up to then neither he nor Karin had noticed. He called the hospital and asked them what to do, and they said to get the fever down by wrapping the baby in wet towels. So they did that, and by midnight the storm had quieted down, the snowplows were out on the streets, and they got the baby to the hospital. But he died. He probably would have died no matter what they'd done—he had meningitis. Even if he'd been a fussed-over, precious little baby in a home where the father didn't get drunk and the mother and father didn't have fights, he might have died; he probably would have died anyway.

Brent wanted it to be his fault, though. Sometimes he wanted it to be their fault. It was like sucking candy to him, that confession. Karin told him to shut up, she told him to *shut up*. She said, "He would have died anyway."

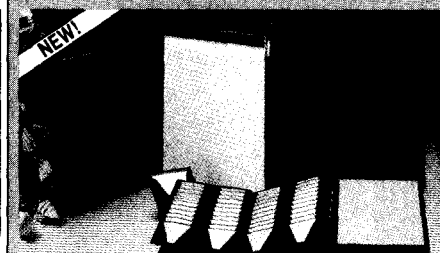
When the storm is over, Tuesday afternoon, Karin puts on her coat and goes out and shovels the parsonage walk. The temperature seems to be dropping even lower and the sky is clear. Austin says they're going to go down to the lake, to look at the ice. If a big storm like this comes fairly early in the year, the wind drives the waves up on the shore and they freeze there. Ice is everywhere, in unlikely formations. People go down and take pictures. The paper often prints the best of them. Austin wants to take some pictures too. He says they'll be something to show people in Hawaii. So Karin shovels the car out, and off they go, Austin driving with great care. Nobody else is down there. The wind is too cold. Austin hangs on to Karin as they struggle along the boardwalk—or where they think the boardwalk must be, under the snow. Sheets of ice drop from the burdened branches of the willow trees to the ground, and the sun shines through them from the west; they're like walls of pearl. Ice is woven through the wire of the high fence, which makes it look like a honeycomb. Waves have frozen as they hit the shore, making mounds and caves, a crazy landscape, out to the rim of the open water. And all the playground equipment, the children's swings and climbing bars, has been transformed by ice, hung with organ pipes or buried

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in what look like half-carved statues, shapes of ice that seem meant to be people, animals, angels, monsters, left unfinished.

Karin is nervous when Austin stands alone to take pictures. He seems shaky to her, and what if he fell? He could break a leg, a hip. Old people break a hip and that's the end of them. Even taking off his gloves to work the camera seems risky. A frozen thumb might be enough to keep him here, make him miss his plane.

Back in the car he does have to rub and blow on his hands. He lets her drive. If something dire happened to him, would Sheila Brothers come here, take over his care, settle into the parsonage, countermand his orders?

"This is strange weather," he says. "Up in northern Ontario it's balmy, even the little lakes are open, temperatures above freezing. And here we are in the grip of the ice, and the wind straight off the Great Plains."

"It'll be all the same to you when you get there," Karin says firmly. "Northern Ontario or the Great Plains or here, you'll be glad to be out of it. Doesn't she ever call you?"

"Who?" Austin says.

"Her. Mrs. Brothers."

"Oh, Sheila. She calls me late at night. The time's so much earlier in Hawaii."

THE PHONE RINGS WITH KARIN ALONE IN THE house the morning before Austin is to leave. A man's voice, uncertain and sullen-sounding.

"He isn't here right now," Karin says. Austin has gone to the bank. "I could get him to call you when he comes in."

"Well, it's long distance," the man says. "It's Shaft Lake."

"Shaft Lake," Karin repeats, feeling around on the phone shelf for a pencil.

"We were just wondering. Like we were just checking. That we got the right time that he gets in. Somebody's got to drive down and meet him. So, he gets in to Thunder Bay at three o'clock, is that right?"

Karin has stopped looking for a pencil. She finally says,

"I guess that's right. As far as I know. If you called back around noon, he'd be here."

"I don't know for sure I can get to a phone around noon. I'm at the hotel here, but then I got to go someplace else. I'd just as soon leave him the message. Somebody's going to meet him at the airport in Thunder Bay three o'clock tomorrow. Okay?"

"Okay," Karin says.

"You could tell him we got him a place to live, too."

"Oh. Okay."

"It's a trailer. He said he wouldn't mind a trailer. See, we haven't had a minister here in a long time."

"Oh," Karin says. "Okay. Yes. I'll tell him."

As soon as she has hung up, she finds Megan's number on the list above the phone and dials it. It rings three or four times and then she hears Megan's voice, sounding brisker than the last time Karin heard it.

"I am very sorry that I cannot take your call at the moment, but if you would leave your name and phone number I will get back to you as soon as possible."

Karin has already started to say she is sorry but this is important when she is interrupted by a beep and realizes it's one of those machines. She starts again, speaking quickly but distinctly after a deep breath.

"I just wanted to tell you. I just wanted you to know. Your father is fine. He is in good health, and mentally he is fine. So you don't have to worry. He is off to Hawaii tomorrow. I was just thinking about—I was just thinking about our conversation on the phone. So I thought I'd tell you not to worry. This is Karin speaking."

And she has just gotten all that said when she hears Austin at the door. Before he can ask or wonder what she's doing there in the hall, she fires a series of questions at him. Did he get to the bank? Did the cold make his chest hurt? When was the Auction Barn truck coming? When did the people from the board want the parsonage keys? Was he going to phone Don and Megan before he left or after he got there or what?

Yes. No. Monday for the truck. Tuesday for the keys, but no rush—if she wasn't finished then, Wednesday would be okay. No more phone calls. He and his children have said all they need to say to each other. Once he's there, he will write them a letter. Write each of them a letter.

"After you're married?"

Yes. Well. Maybe sooner than that.

He has laid his coat across the banister railing. Then she sees him put out a hand, to steady himself, holding on to the railing. He pretends to be fiddling around with his coat.

"You okay?" she says. "You want a cup of coffee?"

For a moment he doesn't say anything. His eyes swim past her. How did anybody believe that this tottery old man, whose body looked to be shriveling day by day, was on his way to marry a comforting widow and spend the rest of his life walking on a sunny beach? It wasn't in him

to do such a thing, ever. He meant to wear himself out, quick, quick, on people as thankless as possible, thankless as Brent. Meanwhile fooling all of them into thinking he'd changed his spots. Otherwise somebody might stop him from going. Slipping out from under, fooling them, enjoying it.

But he really is after something in the coat. He brings out a pint of whiskey.

"Put a little of that in a glass for me," he says. "Never mind the coffee. Just a precaution. Against weakness. From the cold."

He is sitting on the steps when she brings him the whiskey. He drinks it. He wags his head back and forth, as if trying to get it clear. He stands up. "Much better," he says. "Oh, very much better. Now, about those pictures of the ice, Karin. I was wondering, could you pick them up next week? If I left you the money? They're not ready yet."

Even though he's just in from the cold, he's white. If you put a candle behind his face, it would shine through as if he were wax or thin china.

"You'll have to leave me your address," she says. "Where to send them."

"Just hang on to them till I write you. That'd be best."

So she has ended up with a whole roll of pictures of the ice, along with all those other things she had her mind set on. The pictures show the sky bluer than it ever was, but the weaving in the fence, the shape of the organ pipes, is not so plain to see. A human figure needs to be there also, to show what size things were. She should have taken the camera and captured Austin—who has vanished even more completely than the ice, unless his body washes up somewhere in the spring. A thaw, a drowning, and they're altogether gone. But Karin looks so often at these pictures that Austin took—the blue sky, the pale, lumpy ice monstrosities—she looks at them so often that she gets the feeling that he is in them after all. He's a blank in them, but the blank is bright.

She thinks now that he knew. Right at the last, he knew that she'd caught on to him, she understood what he was up to. No matter how alone you are, and how tricky and determined, don't you need one person to know? She could be the one for him. Each of them knew what the other was up to, and didn't let on, and that was a link beyond the usual. Every time she thinks of it she feels approved of—a most unexpected thing.

She puts one of the pictures in an envelope and sends it to Megan. (She tore the list of addresses and phone numbers off the wall, just in case.) She sends another to Don, and another, stamped and addressed, across town to Brent. She doesn't write anything on the pictures or enclose any note. She won't be bothering any of these people again, not even Brent. (The fact is, it's not long till she'll be leaving here.) She just wants to make them wonder. □

He became famous as a half-Scot, half-Apache defender of wildlife, and some believe he should rank with John Muir and Rachel Carson in the environmentalists' pantheon. But he was not exactly what he seemed

GREY OWL

BY KENNETH BROWER

THE TRAIL TO GREY OWL'S CABIN BEGAN AMONG ASPEN UNDER A BIG PRAIRIE sky. In late September, when I set off in pursuit of the old Indian, the aspen—poplar, he would have called them—were nearly leafless, all their green turned yellow-gold, all the gold fallen to the ground. The beaked hazel had dropped its leaves too. The rose hips and high-bush cranberries displayed themselves on naked branches. Puddles in the trail were covered with half-inch panes of ice. On the 1,200-foot escarpment of Riding Mountain, summer is abbreviated, ending a few days before its conclusion on the Manitoba plains below.

An elk had crossed the trail in one spot, and in several places moose. They had left deep tracks, which last night's freeze had set as hard as fossil hoofprints in stone. The moose tracks were the larger and more pointed. They were a day or two old, yet each time I passed a set I took a nervous, reflexive look into the forest around.

Here and there pocket gophers had pushed mounds of black tailings from their burrows onto the trail. In passing I nudged a mound with the toe of my boot. It had no give. It had lost the fine, airy lightness the mounds have in warm weather. Now and again my boots detoured for the pocket-gopher mounds. They did so because of the same powerful obligation that caused them to veer occasionally and tramp on those first panes of autumn ice. I dutifully kicked a few mounds apart. They were black with moisture on the outside, gray on the inside. The wet black exteriors gave the impression that this prairie soil was even richer than it was.

My trip to Grey Owl's cabin was part hike and part pilgrimage. I went in curiosity and a certain embarrassment. Americans know so much less of Canadian history than Canadians know of American. I had grown up in a Cali-

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fornia household where environmentalism and its poets and heroes made most of the table talk, yet before coming to Manitoba I had never heard of Grey Owl. No man was more important to Canadian environmental consciousness, or to the environmental consciousness of the entire British Commonwealth, for that matter. If his deeds had been done at a slightly lower latitude, we all would have heard of him. In the pantheon Grey Owl belongs with Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson—

or perhaps with Lewis Mumford and Joseph Wood Krutch, on the level just below.

I was curious about Grey Owl because he is doubly now a fossil. He has been dead in a personal way for half a century, and he is said to be dead as a type.

In the environmental movement of the 1970s and 1980s bureaucratization has been the trend. Those old clarion voices in the wilderness and *from* the wilderness—Thoreau's, Muir's, Leopold's, Grey Owl's—have done their job in alerting mankind to the environmental threat, according to the new wisdom. The day now belongs to pragmatic, reasonable men who know the art of



compromise and can work effectively with Congress and Parliament. The era of the "stars," those seminal, charismatic, flawed, larger-than-life characters whose eloquence and example brought the natural world back into the world, is finished—or so the bureaucrats themselves assure us.

The trail to Grey Owl's cabin, in more than one sense, was cold.

He-Who-Flies-by-Night

BY HIS OWN TESTIMONY, GREY OWL WAS BORN IN Hermosillo, Mexico, in 1888. His mother was Katherine Co-chise, of the Jacarilla Apaches, his father George MacNeil, a Scot who had served as a scout in the Southwestern Indian wars. MacNeil was a good friend of another old Indian fighter, Buffalo Bill Cody, who in 1887 invited the MacNeils to join the Wild West Show that he was taking to England for Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Grey Owl's gestation, curiously enough, was in England. Their son's birth imminent, the MacNeils returned to the New World. From Mexico the family moved north. At the age of fifteen, the boy parted company with his parents and set off on his own into Ontario. He learned woodcraft from the Ojibways, who adopted him, and he became a trapper and a river guide. The Ojibways called him *Wa-Sha-Quon-Asin*, He-Who-Flies-by-Night, or Grey Owl. The Ojibways appear to have been shrewd judges of character. He-Who-Flies-by-Night would prove the perfect name for Grey Owl.

As the years passed in the north woods, Grey Owl saw less and less of whites and more of Indians. At times he refused to speak anything but Ojibway. He was a man given to dark moods, and occasionally to violence—from time to time he was in trouble with the law—but for the most part his backwoods friends, both Indian and white, found him a humorous man and a good companion. In 1915, when he was twenty-six, he enlisted in the Canadian Army, and he fought as an infantryman in France.

Temperamentally unsuited to military life, he made an indifferent soldier until his platoon commander realized that his solitary nature, his obsession with field craft, his gift for immobility, and his skill with a rifle were all the makings of a good sniper. Grey Owl spent the remainder of the war attempting to shoot enemy soldiers one by one. He was wounded in the wrist and in the foot—one toe had to be amputated—and his lungs were scarred by mustard gas. By all accounts of the backwoodsmen who knew him, he returned to Canada a more melancholy man.

He was not cheered by what was happening to the north woods. The forests of his youth were fast becoming overlogged and overhunted, and he had trouble making a living as a trapper. By 1925, at the age of thirty-seven, he was on the run from the law, pursued by a nemesis, one Inspector Jordan. His crime was not very serious—he had punched a station agent—but Grey Owl was not the sort of man who wanted to spend any time at all in jail.

Traveling with him was the love of his life, an Iroquois girl named Anahareo. Anahareo, a partly acculturated Indian, disliked the cruelty of trapping. It was a sensibility new to Grey Owl, and one that slowly began to tell on him. One day, near the lodge of an adult beaver he had trapped, Grey Owl rescued two beaver kittens he had just orphaned. He took them to his cabin—"two funny-looking furry creatures with little scaly tails and exaggerated hind feet," he would later write.

It was the beginning of the end for the trapper in him. He and Anahareo named the kittens McGinnis and McGinty and learned how to care for them.

"They seemed to be almost like little folk from some other planet, whose language we could not yet quite understand," he would write. "To kill such creatures seemed monstrous. I would do no more of it. Instead of persecuting them further I would study them, see just what there really was to them. I perhaps could start a colony of my own; these animals could not be permitted to pass completely from the face of this wilderness."

In the winter of 1928–1929 he started his first colony.



GREY OWL'S WIFE, ANAHAREO, AND INFANT DAUGHTER

The country he chose for it proved to be poor in game, and to make ends meet he had to write. One northwoods article was accepted by *Country Life*, which liked it enough to commission another. His beaver-colony scheme had a temporary setback when McGinnis and McGinty returned to the wild, but from an Indian friend Grey Owl acquired a new female beaver kitten, whom he named Jelly Roll, and later he rescued a male, Rawhide, from an otter trap he had set. He travelled to Métis-sur-Mer, a resort town on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, in the hopes of earning some money lecturing, and was eventually invited to speak to the Ladies' Club. He began that talk, he would later admit, "like a snake that has swallowed an icicle, chilled from one end to the other," but by the middle he had found his stride, and the ladies of Métis-sur-Mer loved him. A collection was taken at the end, and it earned Grey Owl \$700, more than he and Anahareo had made in that whole season of trapping. His reputation grew. He continued to write articles. In September of 1930 the National Parks of Canada made a film of his work with beaver.

In April of 1931 Grey Owl boarded the train in Quebec with Jelly Roll and Rawhide—Anahareo had left him, as she would often in their life together, to go prospecting—and he and his beaver traveled west to Riding Mountain National Park, where they were to start a new career. The government had decided to support Grey Owl and his beaver colony: he would be working at Riding Mountain on salary. The park superintendent tried to direct him to Lake Audy, a large body of water near the southern boundary of the park. The lake had plenty of aspen and balsam poplar of the right size for beaver, and a history of beaver habitation, but Grey Owl rejected it. Lake Audy was too close to the park boundary, he said. The streams flowed directly out. In springtime the young male beaver would migrate away from the park's safety and would be shot or trapped. Grey Owl chose Beaver Lodge Lake instead. In the vicinity of that smaller lake the creeks ran north, tributaries to no waterway

flowing out of the park until they joined the Ochre River. Grey Owl liked the smaller lake's isolation and the shape of its shoreline. The superintendent surrendered, and a cabin was built for Grey Owl on the shore of Beaver Lodge Lake.

"I once spent a season in the great high oasis of Riding Mountain," Grey Owl later wrote, "with its poplar forest and rolling downs carpeted with myriad flowers, that stands like an immense island of green above the hot, dry sameness of the wheat-stricken Manitoba prairie that surrounds it."

There is no better summary description of Riding Mountain. One of the mysteries of Grey Owl is that a half-breed boy raised by Ojibways could have composed it. How, in the backwoods of Ontario and Quebec, could the author of a phrase like "the hot, dry sameness of the wheat-stricken Manitoba prairie" have developed his style?

Grey Owl's fondness for the great high oasis of Riding Mountain quickly soured. He did not like the park's waterways, which did not permit the free canoe travel he loved. He concluded that the encircledness of Riding Mountain was wrong. The hot, dry sameness of the beaver-hostile country surrounding the national park was inimical to his rebeaver scheme. He requested a transfer, which was granted. In October of 1931, six months after arriving at Riding Mountain, he took his beaver and their new kittens and

moved to Ajawaan Lake, in Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan.

Grey Owl was gone, but his influence persisted. The authorities at Riding Mountain National Park liked his beaver reintroduction plan and they stuck with it. Beaver, decimated in the eighteenth century by Assiniboine, Cree, and Saulteaux trappers, began to multiply in the park.

In November of 1931, the month after he came down from Riding Mountain, Grey Owl's first book, *Men of the Last Frontier*, was published in London; the next year it came out in Toronto and New York. At his new cabin at



BEAVER LODGE, ON AJAWAAN LAKE



GREY OWL IN HIS CABIN

CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE

CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE

Ajawaan Lake he wrote a second book, *Pilgrims of the Wild*. The Canadian government produced more films on his beaver. His fame spread on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1935 his English publisher arranged a tour in Britain. Grey Owl arrived at Southampton, wearing a blue serge suit, moccasins, and a gray sombrero, his face lean and ascetic, his black hair braided in two plaits. He lectured and showed his beaver films, first to small audiences but soon to packed houses, with policemen controlling the queues. He was a sensation.

"Europe had not heard such a voice as his since the eighteenth century and the beginning of the industrial revolution," his publisher, Lovat Dickson, wrote years afterward, attempting to explain Grey Owl's impact on the England of 1935. "Suddenly here was this romantic figure telling them with his deep and thrilling voice that somewhere there was a land where life could begin again, a place which the screams of demented dictators could not reach." The tour was extended to four months, in the course of which Grey Owl gave two hundred lectures to more than a quarter million people. *Pilgrims of the Wild*, which had already been reprinted five times in the nine months since publication, was reprinted again every month of his tour. He had come to England with his belongings in a knapsack; he left with eight large pieces of luggage full of gifts for himself and his family. He was presented, as he embarked on the ship home to Canada, with the check representing his earnings from the tour. Grey Owl seems to have been a man genuinely uninterested in money, and never once in England had he asked how the tour was profiting. He was returning to his beaver a rich man.

Grey Owl as Writer

AS A WRITER, GREY OWL HAD MANY VOICES—TOO many voices, some might argue. "And it is reflections such as these," Grey Owl wrote, in the preface to his *Tales of an Empty Cabin*,

that finally aroused in me a distaste for killing, and brought a growing feeling of kinship with those inoffensive and interesting beasts that were co-dwellers with me in this Land of Shadows and of Silence. So that ultimately I laid aside my rifle and my traps and like Paul, worked for the betterment of those whom I had so assiduously persecuted.

And yet just pages later, in a chapter called "Cry Wolves!" this same Paul of the wilderness wrote,

The tall snow-covered trees along the shore seemed to stare down on me kind of dour and grim, like I had butted in where I wasn't wanted. And man! she was cold. . . . Anyway I picked off up the lake and saw a wolf alright enough, out of shot, and screeching blue murder. I sneaked up onto a point and saw the rest of the lake and say, it looked to be just covered with wolves.

Later still, in a chapter called "A Letter," Grey Owl gave us a note we are to believe he wrote in 1918, from the Canadian woods, in his semiliterate days, to the nurse who had tended him when he was recovering from war wounds in an English hospital. "Dear Miss Nurse," he began.

Nearly four months now the Canada geese flew south and the snow is very deep. It is long timesince I wrot to you, but I have gone a long ways and fолled some hard trails since that time. The little wee sorryful animals I tol you about sit around me tonight, and so they dont get tired and go away I write to you now. I guess they like to see me workin.

Grey Owl was in chronic violation of the seventh rule of the nineteen that, according to Mark Twain, govern literary art. In his essay "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses," Twain, after noting that Cooper, in the space of two thirds of a page of *The Deerslayer*, committed 114 offenses against literary art out of a possible 115—a record—proceeded to state those rules. Rule 7 requires "that when a personage talks like an illustrated, gilt-edged, tree-calf, hand-tooled, seven-dollar Friendship's Offering in the beginning of a paragraph, he shall not talk like a negro minstrel in the end of it."

Grey Owl himself would have shrugged off any attempts to defend his style. Internal evidence suggests that he owed something to Twain—his rhythms are more Huck Finn than Ojibway—but otherwise he and Twain had different tastes. Grey Owl *liked* James Fenimore Cooper, though he misspelled his name, and he was also an admirer of Longfellow. In his essay "The Mission of Hiawatha," Grey Owl wrote, "It has become a pose of modern ultra-sophistication to scoff at those works of Fennimore Cooper and Longfellow that portray the life of the North American Indian. Those who do so are, not infrequently, equipped with little or no knowledge of the subject."

Of the literary rules on Twain's list, Grey Owl periodically violated the eighth as well. Rule 8 requires "that crass stupidities shall not be played upon the reader as 'the craft of the woodsman, the delicate art of the forest.'" Grey Owl habitually violated rule 9, which requires "that the personages of a tale shall confine themselves to possibilities and let miracles alone; or, if they venture a miracle, the author must so plausibly set it forth as to make it look possible and reasonable."

In the "Cry Wolves!" chapter, Grey Owl violated rule 9 in a miraculous encounter with wolves on thin ice:

I got a whiff of the strong musky smell these animals make when they mean business, and I saw right away I was up against it; no fooling this time. The wolves came towards me, spreading out, and commenced to snap and snarl and worry at the air, for all the world like a bunch of dogs baiting a cow. I was right out on the weak spot, and as they crept up on me, the ice commenced to groan and crack with the extra weight, and I

could see myself being soon measured for a harp and a pair of wings unless things took a change. This time I had the thirty-two special, and felt right at home. I didn't stop to do any figuring, but let go a few with the old artillery. The light was poor, and although I pass for being pretty handy with the hardware, I saw only two of the lobos fall. The rest backed off into the dark and commenced to howl, but it wasn't long before they came back for more. They fanned out like troops under fire. . . .

These suicidal maneuverings, in an animal as intelligent and man-wary as the wolf, may not be technically mirac-

to a fondness for that whole school of wolf writing. Grey Owl certainly was not the last popular Canadian nature writer to invent adventures with wolves.

Grey Owl's best book, *Pilgrims of the Wild*, is an account of the transformation at the heart of his life's drama—the story of his flight with Anahareo through the slash and burn of ruined country, his realization that the day of the trapper was in twilight, his rescue of the beaver kittens, his metamorphosis from trapper to advocate of animals. In *Pilgrims* he finds a single voice, one that seems to be his own. There is a nice symmetry to his cast of characters: two human beings and two beaver. Grey Owl is at



CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE, PRINCE ALBERT NATIONAL PARK

"TO KILL SUCH CREATURES SEEMED MONSTROUS." GREY OWL FEEDING ONE OF THE "LITTLE PEOPLE"

ulous but they are certainly preternatural. They are in violation of the spirit of rule 9, if not the letter.

Fifty-eight wolves, at the latest count, reside in Riding Mountain National Park, and for several years a scientist named Paul Paquet has been studying them. When I described Grey Owl's account to Paquet, and later to Ludwig Carbyn, the Canadian Wildlife Service research scientist who was overseeing Paquet's work, the two men just laughed. Wolf scientists everywhere, I have found, are accustomed to this sort of exaggeration and are surprisingly charitable toward its perpetrators. Many grew up reading Ernest Thompson Seton and will admit

his best when writing about the beaver. For page after page his beaver observations are sharp, humorous, and entirely believable.

Their hands—one can call them nothing else—were nearly as effective as our own more perfect members would be, in the uses they were put to. They could pick up very small objects with them, manipulate sticks and stones, strike, push, and heave with them and they had a very firm grasp which it was difficult to disengage.

Each had a special liking for one of us, and continued faithful to his choice. . . . They would generally lie on our bodies, one on each of us, the favoured posi-

tion being a rather inconvenient one across the throat.

At three months of age they ceased to be of any further trouble to us save for the daily feed of porridge, an insatiable and very active curiosity regarding the contents of provision bags and boxes, the frequent desire for petting that seemed to fill some great want in their lives, and the habit they had of coming into our beds, soaking wet, at all hours of the night.

They were hostile to anything they deemed to be an intruder and became very angry at the continued visits to the tent of a weasel, one of them eventually making a pass at him, the agile weasel, of course being in two or three other places by the time the blow landed.

They were . . . gentle and good natured, they gave out no odour whatever, and were altogether the best conducted pair of little people one could wish to live with.

THE TRAIL TO GREY Owl's cabin descended from the negligible elevations to which it had climbed, and now its lowest stretches were flooded, owing to beaver dams. I was able to pick my way around most of the wet spots, but finally, halfway to the cabin, the path dipped to a swampy place where all detours were under water. Most beaver ponds in autumn are tea-colored. Here the volume of the flow was such that the tea had clarified. The path became a clear, cold stream flowing shallowly over a bottom of golden leaves. The margins of the stream, in all directions, for as far as I could see, were marshland under a half inch of ice. There was nothing to do but ford.

Grey Owl's beaver-seeding scheme succeeded better than he ever dreamed. The topographic maps for Riding Mountain National Park are all a little off, because surveyors have trouble traveling far in any direction without running into a beaver pond or marsh. Beaver are doing so well in the park that population pressures continually force excess animals to move out. In summertime beaver are a principal food of the park's wolves, but the wolves can't eat enough of them. The expatriate beaver invade the wheat farmland around the park's periphery, just as

Grey Owl predicted they would. They dam streams on private land, irritating the farmers, who trap and shoot them—just as Grey Owl predicted—and they present park authorities with a big public-relations problem. Park wardens are not supposed to interfere with beaver, but occasionally they do blow a beaver dam, just so human visitors can keep their heads above water. Grey Owl's "little people," if left to their own devices, would turn the escarpment of Riding Mountain into a high reservoir in the middle of the Manitoba plains.

The aspen forest opened up into sedgy meadows and a connected system of beaver ponds. I passed a dry pond.

Sedges and willows were taking it over from the outside in, and the remnants of the old lodge made a mound in what was now meadow. The lodge was the slightest of swellings, but it was artifice, and that caught the eye, just as the artifice of Indian middens does. I saw the cabin ahead. It stood on a slight prominence above what had to be Beaver Lodge Lake. When I crossed the marshy outlet to the lake, the long grasses there were still in shadow. It was nearly noon, but the tussocks lay this way and that under the weight of frost, as if by scythe. The frost-mown grasses were crunchy underfoot.

A few yards from the cabin I came into the light. The sun was warm on Grey Owl's porch. I pulled off my daypack and set it against the logs of the cabin wall. The signs said GREY OWL'S CABIN. PLEASE RESPECT THIS

NATIONAL HERITAGE and CABANE DE GREY OWL. AIDEZ-NOUS A CONSERVER CE PATRIMOINE NATIONAL. For the most part visitors had done as the signs asked, carving few initials on the logs, inside or out. I searched the walls for some mark of Grey Owl's, and found none.

THE CLIMAX OF GREY OWL'S SECOND TOUR OF ENGLAND, in 1937, was a command performance at Buckingham Palace. The original plan for his palace lecture had Grey Owl and the other guests waiting in the reception hall. The footmen would throw open the



ON A BOOK TOUR, WITH THE PUBLISHER LOVAT DICKSON



GREETING VISITORS TO AJAWAAN LAKE

doors, and the King and his family would enter. Grey Owl and the other guests would stand, and Grey Owl would begin his lecture.

Grey Owl, democrat and showman, insisted that the protocol be reversed. King George VI, good-humored, agreed to be seated first. The footmen threw open the doors, and there, in his buckskins, stood Grey Owl.

He saluted the King and said, "*How Kola*," and a few more words in Ojibway. "Which, being interpreted, means 'I come in peace, brother,'" he explained to the King. The King smiled and acknowledged the greeting. Grey Owl began his lecture. The Queen, the Queen's parents—the Earl and Countess of Strathmore—and much of the palace staff were in attendance that day, but the true Grey Owl fans at Buckingham Palace were Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. The command performance had been arranged mostly for them. Grey Owl, the canny performer, was quick to understand this. After the first minutes, he directed his speech exclusively to the smallest but most enthusiastic members of his audience. He gave what Lovat Dickson, who was on hand, considered one of his most inspired performances. At the conclusion Princess Elizabeth jumped up. "Oh, do go on!" she cried. For the future queen Grey Owl did a ten-minute encore.

Afterward, the King came up to Grey Owl, Elizabeth on one arm and Margaret on the other. Troubled by what he had just learned about the possible extinction of beaver, King George asked questions about the beaver situation, and Grey Owl answered. Lovat Dickson watched his author proudly. "I was admiring Grey Owl's attitude," Dickson has written.

He was more than ever the Indian, proud, fierce, inscrutable. Those fringed buckskins, the wampum belt, the knife in its sheath at his side, the moccasins on those polished floors, the long dark hair surmounted by a single feather, were all in such contrast with the trim, neat figure of the King, with the fair, reddish hair characteristic of the House of Windsor.

When the time came to go, Grey Owl extended his right hand to the King. He touched a royal shoulder lightly with his beaded buckskin gloves. "Goodbye, brother," the Indian said. "I'll be seeing you."

Grey Owl's Secret

GREY OWL SPOKE TRUER, AND FALSER, THAN anyone in the gathering could have guessed. Grey Owl was brother indeed to the King—or, rather, subject and countryman. Grey Owl's real name was Archibald Belaney, and he had been born in Hastings, England, forty-nine years before. He had never been to Hermosillo, and his mother was not Katherine Cochise or any other Apache. "More than ever the Indian," Dickson had mused. Never, in truth, the Indian at all.

Immediately upon Grey Owl's death in Saskatchewan, on April 13, 1938, the truth hit the papers. "GREY OWL HAD COCKNEY ACCENT AND FOUR WIVES," one British headline read. "GREY OWL ENGLISH BOY," read another.

Archie Belaney's father was not George MacNeil, Indian scout, but George Belaney, scoundrel and rotter. George Belaney was a scam artist, bigamist, pedophile, drunk, and lecher. His one real talent was in shaking down his widowed mother. At the age of twenty he succeeded in getting her to set him up in a tea and coffee business,

which he quickly brought to the verge of ruin by leaving for half a year of big-game hunting in Africa, and then finished off by departing again for a month of hunting in Suffolk. At twenty-one, George impregnated the fifteen-year-old daughter of a tavern owner, secretly married her, and then, on the birth of their child—a daughter—abandoned them both. With a girlfriend, Elizabeth Cox, he traveled to Florida and spent two years hunting and practicing amateur taxidermy. At Key West, Elizabeth was delivered of their child, a daughter, Gertrude. The three were forced to return to England, Elizabeth having become violently ill from arsenic poisoning.



GREY OWL RESPLENDENT, AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS FAME

CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE, PRINCE ALBERT NATIONAL PARK

Arsenic is used in taxidermy, and Elizabeth's exposure could have been accidental. George Belaney may have had nothing to do with it. It is worthy of note, however, that George's great uncle, James Belaney, himself an avid hunter, the famous author of *A Treatise on Falconry*, and a bachelor until middle age, was arrested and tried for killing his young wife with prussic acid. The *Times* and other journals were certain of his guilt, but James had an excuse for possession of the poison—in his case not taxidermy but indigestion, which prussic acid was used to treat—and he was acquitted.

Elizabeth Cox recovered, at any rate. George Belaney talked his mother into setting him up as an orange planter in Florida, and he and Elizabeth returned to that state, this time taking along her twelve-year-old sister, Kitty. Elizabeth died within a year, even as their orange plantation was going under. George fell into drunkenness and delirium tremens, and then pulled himself together sufficiently to marry Elizabeth's sister, now thirteen. It was this child bride, Kitty—Katherine Cox—who in Grey Owl's revisionist history of himself became Katherine Cochise of the Jacarilla Apaches. George sold his orange grove, left his three-year-old daughter, Gertrude, with a Florida neighbor, and returned with the pregnant Kitty to England. On September 18, 1888, Kitty gave birth to Archibald Stansfeld Belaney.

George Belaney was unable to keep a job or mend his ways. When Archie Belaney was four, the family solicitor persuaded George to sign a document agreeing to voluntary exile. On the condition that he never set foot in England again, he was to receive a small income for life. He and his son parted in tears. George Belaney would die twelve years later, somewhere in Mexico.

Archie Belaney was brought up in Hastings by his grandmother and his maiden aunts. He was a loner, a reader of weekly serials on Indians, an animal lover who kept a menagerie in the attic. He had frogs, mice, a snake he called Rajah, and later a defanged adder that he liked to bring to school in his pocket or shirt. He was a good actor, with a talent for parody. His trademark was hooting like an owl. He spent his free time wandering the sea cliffs at Hastings or in St. Helen's Woods, a preserve north of the Belaney house, and in the wan English summertime he grew almost swarthy. (Later, as a grown man in the long summer days of the Canadian north, he would tan even darker. Unsatisfied, he would be driven to dye his skin darker still. One of his biographers has speculated that this habit may have begun in his English boyhood, his pocket money in Hastings going to cheap dyes.)

"A third eccentric joined the School," his grammar school's history noted of his arrival in September, 1899.

This was Archie Belaney. He did not conceal firearms in his pockets, but just as likely might produce from them a snake or a fieldmouse. Born eleven years before, and living at 36 St. Mary's Terrace, he was a delicate boy but full of devilment; and fascinated by woods and wild animals. . . . What with his camping out, his tracking of all and sundry, and wild hooting, he was more like a Red Indian than a respectable Grammar School boy.

In his teens Archie grew more and more like an Indian. His dream was to go to Canada and live among Indians, study them, maybe write an anthropological text. His aunts tried to dissuade him, but he persisted. In 1906, when he was eighteen, his way was paid to Toronto, with the understanding on the part of his family (if not him-

THE REPORT

The wind is blowing on the prison walls
Above the secret towns. In the secret towns
Men are walking through the streets with guns.

Men with guns are walking through the streets
Below the prison walls. The prison walls
Are on the cliffs above the secret towns.

Behind the shattered windows and the shattered doors,
The women kneel and pray. The women pray
While men are walking through the streets with guns.

Men with guns are walking through the streets,
Breaking down the doors. Breaking down the doors
Is what the men do in the secret towns.

The women pray they'll stop. *Please stop*, they pray,
And let the prison fall. Let the prison fall,
They pray behind the windows and the shattered doors.

But the men are laughing in the secret towns,
And carrying the guns. The men with guns
Walk and laugh below the prison walls.

Below the prison walls lie secret towns
With broken doors. Beyond the broken doors
Men are walking through the streets with guns.

—Dick Allen

self) that he would study farming. No one knows what happened to him next. He would return several times to England, but in Canada he had already begun to disappear into the myth of his own making.

THAT GREY OWL'S SECRET COULD HAVE GONE undetected by his English and American audiences seems, in hindsight, odd. It required of those audiences a willing suspension of belief in the laws of genetics. Dark eyes are a dominant trait. A blue-eyed Scot and a black-eyed Apache are unlikely to produce a blue-eyed son. It required a romantic ignorance of how American Indians dress in the twentieth century. Buckskins, wampum belts, braided hair, and feathers still had some ceremonial use in the 1920s and 1930s, as they have now, but Grey Owl, in the photo sections of his books, is shown *hunting* dressed like that. The acceptance of Grey Owl as an Indian required, as well, considerable naiveté about the nature of literary art. A small boy taught his three R's by an Apache aunt in dusty Indian encampments on the Mexican desert—with the first R subsequently polished, over long winter nights in boreal forests, by reading descriptions of bear traps and shotguns in mail-order catalogues—does not learn to write in the several mannered styles of Grey Owl.

Grey Owl's frontispieces alone should have tipped off the public. Nearly every one of them is a scowling portrait of the author in braids and buckskins, his brows knit darkly, the corners of his mouth turned down. Some scowling Indians can be seen in the old daguerrotypes, but most nineteenth-century Indians—most nineteenth-century Europeans, for that matter—stared into the new machine with a stony absence of expression. Grey Owl overdid it.

From the very beginning, in fact, some people saw through Grey Owl. The Ojibway knew he was not Indian or part-Indian. Many of the white people of the Canadian backwoods knew Indians well enough to know that Grey

Owl wasn't one of them—not the way he played classical music. "If you're an Indian, I'm a Chinaman," a Quebec man once told him. The rivermen of the Mississagi River took him for a white man with maybe a streak of Indian blood. Grey Owl demonstrated his knife-throwing talent for them—this was supposed to be an Indian skill—but he also recited Shakespeare. Rumor was that he was a McGill man, the prodigal son of a rich Montreal family.

Not even all the English were fooled. On Grey Owl's first English tour, one of the stops on his lecture circuit was Hastings, Archie Belaney's home town. Grey Owl spoke to a packed theater at the White Rock Pavilion, not far from St. Helen's Wood—his first hunting grounds. Among the listeners was Mary McCormick, one of twelve children who had lived in the house next door to the Belaney place. Mary's younger brother George had been Archie Belaney's friend and classmate. It had been Archie's habit to signal George and her other brothers by hooting like an owl. Occasionally he would climb the roof and appear at the boys' window before dawn, awakening the brothers with his owl call, and once he had built a wigwam on the McCormicks' lawn. Mary McCormick was middle-aged, like the tall Indian in buckskins at the podium. Thirty years had passed since Archie Belaney's departure from England. At the conclusion of the lecture, as she left the the-

ater, McCormick turned to a friend. "That's Belaney, or I'll eat my hat," she said.

Conviction Triumphant

FOR THE FIRST DAYS AFTER GREY OWL'S DEATH, the English press had fun with him. People love a hoax, and the Archie Belaney in Grey Owl had been uncovered. Within a week or so the press began to have second thoughts about him. On April 22, 1938, nine days after Grey Owl died in Saskatchewan, an editorialist for *The Times* arrived at what for me is the cor-



ARCHIBALD BELANEY AT THIRTEEN, HASTINGS, ENGLAND

rect view of him: "Tu-whit tu-whoo-hoo-Who was he really, this mysterious Grey Owl? . . . The strange bird seems to be acquiring as many birthplaces as Homer, as many wives as Solomon. . . . Was he Grey Owl at all, or another gentleman of the same name, like the author of Shakespeare's plays?"

"He . . . gave his extraordinary genius, his passionate sympathy, his bodily strength, his magnetic personal influence, even his very earnings to the service of animals."

Grey Owl did give those things, and that is what does matter.

In the initial gusto with which the English press went after Grey Owl, there was surely some envy. For all he was not, Grey Owl was in fact a competent trapper. He was a good shot with rifle and shotgun. He could throw knives accurately—a useless talent of the sort that no boy grows old enough not to admire. Grey Owl really did have troubles with the law, and spent part of his life as a fugitive. It's hard not to look up to him secretly for that.

In Hastings the twelve-year-old Archie Belaney had amazed his aunt Ada with his knowledge of Canadian Indians. He showed her a map on which he had marked in the linguistic groups of aboriginal Canada, the Athabascan-speakers in the northwest, the Iroquois in the south, the Algonkian in the east. He showed her how the Algonkian-speakers, the group that interested him most, were divided into tribes: Ojibway, Cree, Naskapi, Penobscot, Micmac, Algonquin, Têtes de Boules, and Montagnais. His penny novels on Indians were illustrated in the margins with drawings he had done of Indians fighting white men.

It happens that my own illustrations at that age were of Indians fighting white men. They were drawings full of carnage, the Indians always winning, the cavalymen riddled by arrows and spears. I was a twelve-year-old expert on Indians myself. My specialty was the Western tribes, and of those, I liked best the Apaches—Grey Owl's putative maternal line. I know, for example, that his "Jacarilla" Apaches should be spelled "Jicarilla." I can still tell you the date Geronimo surrendered: September 4, 1886, just two years before Grey Owl's birth to Katherine Cochise in Hermosillo, Mexico—or, if you prefer, just two years before Archie Belaney's birth to Katherine Cox in Hastings. At ages nine to twelve I dreamed of being an Indian. Little Archie Belaney had actually gone and done it.

Margaret McCormick, another sister in the clan that had lived next door to the Belaneys, put an interesting twist on the Grey Owl question when she was interviewed after his death. Had Archie Belaney become Grey Owl, she wondered, or had Grey Owl become Belaney? The real wonder of his life, she suggested, was that the physique, the proclivities, the temperament—the soul—of an Ojibway had found its way into an English schoolboy.

It is a truism that fiction is often truer than truth. Grey

Owl was a walking, talking fiction who made real to his urban audiences, as a less false man could not, the plight of beaver and bear and lynx. His fictive gift, his fictive impulse, laced his readers and listeners into his buckskins, strapped them into his snowshoes with him. His unmasking—his defeathering—did not diminish him but over time has only made him larger, deepening his mystery.

Grey Owl was full of imperfections, yet was one of those Thoreau called "men with the seeds of life in them." Today's environmental bureaucrats seem to be correct that Grey Owl's type is in eclipse, their own type in ascendancy. It is also true that tropical forests are vanishing at an accelerated rate, toxic wastes are multiplying, the oceans are dying, holes are appearing in the ozone layer, the Ontario lakes that Grey Owl paddled are going dead and fishless under acid rain. Reasonable, politically astute men and women are fine. They make good soldiers in any movement. They are useful for chores and follow-up. But what we need more than ever are men and women who capture our imaginations.

FROM GREY OWL'S FRONT PORCH I WALKED DOWN to the lake. An abandoned beaver lodge stood close to shore. The lake had receded somewhat since the days when the lodge was in use, and nothing but a twelve-foot moat of marshy grass separated the lodge from dry land. A wolf or coyote, splashing across, would scarcely have got its feet wet. The lodge was no longer a safe place for beaver.

The grassy mound of the lodge was all overgrown with fireweed gone to seed, and the cottony tufts were blowing away on the wind. The wind had bite, despite the noon brightness of the sun, and what was left of the lake's ice had blown to the eastern end. Watching the tufts—smoke of fireweed—sail on the wind, I thought about Jelly Roll and Rawhide. Had this lodge been theirs? It did have the look of a lodge abandoned for about half a century.

Back on Grey Owl's porch I leaned against the logs of the cabin, opened my daypack, and took out my lunch. I had bought it quickly from behind the glass of the counter at the Wasagaming Hotel, and no dietician would have approved. From the paper bag I brought out peach yogurt, a doughnut, and a *jelly roll*. I stared down, stunned, at that last item. Until this moment I had not understood the eerie, coincidental rightness of my choice.

"To Jelly Roll," I said. I raised the jelly roll in a toast to the forest. My voice was hoarse, not my own, for I had not used it all day. The gesture at the forest felt theatrical, but that had a rightness too. The original tenant of this cabin was a theatrical type.

"To Jelly Roll," I repeated. "To the little people. To Rawhide, and Grey Owl, and the whole gang." □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

BENITO MUSSOLINI AND ADOLF HITLER

AS HIS PLANE PUT down in Venice on June 14, 1934, Adolf Hitler felt himself at a decided disadvantage. For one thing, he had neglected to wear a uniform. It was he who had requested the meeting, but, still new to dictatorship, he had not foreseen that his brown gabardine and limp fedora would be overshadowed by the snappy attire of the commander-in-chief of the Fascist militia. Then there were the facts that Mussolini spoke German, while he himself did not know Italian, and that this was foreign territory. In spite of stiff-armed salutes, heel-clicking, and the "Horst Wessel Lied," Hitler could not quite control a nervous twitch.

For his part, Mussolini planned to be a perfect host. He had the assurance of a man who, after declaring himself Minister of War, the Navy, and the Air Force, *then* learned to swim and fly, and to ride a horse so that he could review his troops. Neither he nor Hitler had risen above the rank of corporal in the last war, but there was no need to bring that up. It was the fate of Austria that

Mussolini wished to discuss. So he conducted his guest by car to Stra, near Padua, where they secluded themselves in the drawing room of the royal palace.

At that point all formality—and civility—ceased. Opposition brought out the maniacal in Hitler. "It is my will, and the indomitable will of the German people," screeched the Führer, "that Austria become an integral part of the Reich!" Il Duce blasted back with Italy's equally indomitable resolve that Austria remain independent. Anxious attendants heard fists thumping, and increasingly frenzied rantings. Finally the door flew open and both men tramped through. They did not look at each other. They acknowledged the cheering crowd and returned to Venice in separate cars.

Yet to be endured were formal dinners, a concert of Wagner, the obligatory military review. Good-byes were frigid. What was his impression? Mussolini was afterward asked. "A mad little clown," he said.

—Nancy Caldwell Sorel

Home

PETER MAUSS / ESTO



The entry-hall staircase in a Connecticut house by Allan Greenberg

Modern Classics

Allan Greenberg's houses reflect a revival of the classical tradition

by Philip Langdon

SEVERAL YEARS ago a Connecticut couple decided they wanted a modern house. They invited a prominent modern architect to look at their property, and soon he gave them a sketch—of a dwelling with the second floor twisted atop the first, creating what the couple says were “all these wonderful angles that you didn’t want to live in.” When they reminded the designer that what they really wanted was a simple, clean-lined house—the kind of building that had made his reputation—he replied, “No, this is a new thing I want to do.”

Frustrated, the couple tried another architect, this one a prominent South American. After he spent a few months in careful con-

templation, he presented them with a model. Well, this is a magnificent piece of art, they thought, but it’s an *underground* house. We don’t want to mow the roof. When they parted from the South American, he gave them a book on Italian architectural history, and it began to alter their outlook. Now they sensed that they wanted a classical home, so they sought out a well-known postmodern architect, thinking that he would give them what they were looking for. But they discovered

that he was unwilling to satisfy their aspirations. “We wanted an Italian villa,” they recall. “He wanted a French one.”

This kind of conflict between ambitious architects and their clients is common. Wi-

told Rybczynski, a Montreal architect and the author of *Home* and *The Most Beautiful House in the World*, says that one of the problems with architects is that in order to build a reputation they design houses that suit their need for a strong signature, frequently at the expense of their clients’ wishes. The architect, if he’s aiming for the brass ring of publication in major architectural journals, has to insist on creating buildings that add up to a strong, single-minded portfolio. Yielding to the highly divergent needs of clients runs the risk of muddying the architect’s message.

The Connecticut couple went through about ten architects in all before finding one who pleased them. Ultimately they settled on Allan Greenberg, of New Haven, after reading an article that called him the dean of classical architecture in America. Greenberg is willing, even eager, to give clients what they want within a broad range of classical and traditional styles. The couple now occupy a grand symmetrical house that Greenberg designed with columns, pilasters, sculpture niches, and a domed ballroom with a cupola at its peak—a home based on the Italian classical architecture of Palladio and on buildings as American as Monticello.

“One role of the architect,” Greenberg says, “is to act as the sponge, absorbing everything your client tells you. You throw it back in the form of drawings, to test your understanding of the client’s needs. When people tell you something, it may be based on premises that are unstated. You have to learn what are the unarticulated premises on which their desires are based. It’s very difficult.”

Still, it can be done. The couple with the neoclassical villa has nothing but praise for how well the house fits them. “Allan is a great problem-solver,” one of the owners says. “He asks you what do you want where. He was the only one of the ten who would really listen to us.”

GREENBERG ARRIVED at his current status as a leading classical architect by a circuitous route. Born in 1938 in Johannesburg, South Africa, of Russian Jewish ancestry, he was educated in South Africa and London and he worked for architects in Denmark, Sweden, and Finland before coming to the United States in

PETER MAUSS / ESTO



1964, to earn a master's degree at Yale University. He taught at Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia, and served for several years as a consultant to the Connecticut court system, doing long-range planning for judicial facilities and reviewing other architects' designs. His work has included academic buildings, offices and meeting rooms for businesses and the State Department, houses, and the beginning of designs for part of a 5,000-acre community called West Pleasanton, near San Jose, California.

It was while working for the courts that he came to see architecture primarily from the client's rather than the designer's point of view. "What this taught me," he says, "was that buildings that architects thought were good could be catastrophes for the clients—in terms of their operations and maintenance but also in their meaning."

Meaning is central to Greenberg. He was trained in both classical and modern architecture, and for a while was influenced by the Philadelphia architect Robert Venturi, whose writings ushered in what has become known as postmodernism. But Greenberg decided that there was something unsatisfying about seizing bits and pieces of historical architecture and reproducing them playfully or mockingly in new buildings. The meaning of the historical elements was missing or obscure or deliberately subverted in the new buildings. Greenberg reveres classical forms and employs them for the most part with earnest conviction.

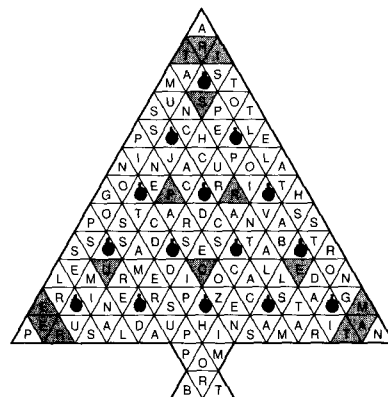
He sees himself as a populist, even if he drives a BMW and has an air of formality and reserve. "Most Americans love traditional architecture," he says. "Three million people visit Mount Vernon every year. I see the preservation movement as a grass-roots response to modern architecture, which lacked a sense of continuity with the past." Greenberg is described by people who have worked for him as a studious, dedicated man who rushes from one appointment to another yet gives unhurried attention to whomever he is dealing with. But he can also be prickly, using his British accent to intimidating effect. He argues that classical and traditional buildings are more readily understood by the public than modern or postmodern buildings. Unlike many architects, he sees nothing wrong with the desire of many people

Answers to the December Puzzles

"DECORATIONS"

Trim a tree: SPRUCE (double def.)

Across. 3. SU-N-SPOT (rev.) 5. NINJA (hidden); CUPOLA 7. POSTCARD (rev.); CANVAS 9. LEMUR (hidden); MEDICO (anag.); CALLEDON 10. PIERUSIAL (rev.); DAUPHIN (anag.); SAMARITAN *Down.* 1. ARISTOTLE; LATHS (hidden rev.); STRONG(MAN (anag. + m) 2. MU(N)CH; CUR-RANT; AL-(U)S-TAR 4. PINE (double def.); PAR(S)E; COZENS (homoph.) 6. GO(SSAM)IER (*mass* rev.); S(U)P-PORT 8. SE(MI)NAL (rev.) *Up.* 10. PEERLESS (anag.); POGO-NIPS; SU(MA)-TRA 11. SANER (hidden); M(A-DC)AP; C(ACHE-P)OT 12. AU-SPICES; CAR(I)OL-E 13. MAT-ADOR(e) 14. BR(OM)INE; C(A-LAB)ASH



ACROSTIC NO. 53

"The U.S. Postal Service sent out a big batch of pamphlets that told citizens how to wrap Christmas parcels for mailing. But in Des Moines, Iowa, the package containing those pamphlets accidentally broke open, scattering them all over the place."

—L. M. Boyd, (*Boyd's*) *Book of Odd Facts*

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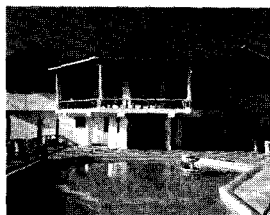
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Echoes of Mount Vernon: One wing of the Connecticut house. Inside, the study and master bathroom

for "Colonial" houses in modern times. On the contrary, he is intent on perpetuating the resonant tradition from which the simplified American Colonial style is descended.

To work effectively in traditional styles, he sometimes travels extensively with clients, looking at buildings that might serve as models. For a Connecticut house much different from the neoclassical villa, he and a client toured Virginia and Connecticut period houses built from the eighteenth century to the turn of the twentieth, and he traveled by himself to others in Massachusetts. Eventually a decision was made that the new house, on a knoll of a rolling several-hundred-acre estate, should be loosely based on Washington's Mount Vernon, but about half again as long.

Visitors drive into the Connecticut estate by way of a winding road that Greenberg says he and the client plotted inch by inch to offer a succession of oblique views of the house rather than a long, direct approach in the French style. "The changing, picturesque views make it softer, less pompous,"

he says. Not until the very end of the drive, when visitors enter an elegant motor court, are they confronted by the full power of the architecture—the symmetrical white pedimented house straight ahead and its dependencies (a pool house to one side and a garage and service wing to the other) reaching around on both sides.

Greenberg sees the basic Mount Vernon shape as one of classicism's archetypally humane gestures, suggestive of an embrace. Classical architecture is full of anthropomorphic features, as George Hersey, an art historian at Yale, makes clear in a recent book, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture*. People without a classical education may not consciously recognize that many of the architectural features come from the human body, but it's quite possible that they are subliminally aware that the symmetry of a classical building mirrors the symmetry of the body, that Corinthian capitals connote a human head and hair, that the type of bracket known as a console resembles a human ear, and so on. Rudolf Arnheim, an authority on visual

perception in art, pointed out years ago that modern buildings, as broad at the top as at the bottom, are off-putting in that they seem to defy the law of gravity. Classical buildings, on the other hand, typically act in harmony with gravity, appearing smaller and lighter at the top than at the bottom. Greenberg's houses are often built with a base, such as a portico on the main façade or a walkway along the house's foundation, that extends outward just as the feet extend out from a human being, offering a sense of stability.

Inside Greenberg's houses prolific moldings help to establish a comfortable though bold scale. "There should be no room in a house in which you're overwhelmed," he says. Chair-rail moldings or wainscoting breaks eleven-foot-high walls into more comfortably human dimensions. Cornice moldings of varying designs soften and embellish the transitions between walls and ceilings.

Greenberg has been known to buy a cache of fine wood, such as bird's-eye maple or tiger maple, and store it until an opportunity comes along to use it in

one of his buildings. He revels in subtle details of craftsmanship—for example, having the mahogany handrail of a grand staircase dyed, waxed, and polished rather than stained and sealed, which he says would fill up the pores and not produce as rich a luster.

Most of the ornament is modeled closely on that of buildings of the past, though Greenberg feels free to arrange the elements in fresh ways. A small amount he invents outright. For State Department ceremonial rooms in Washington he designed columns with capitals incorporating the Great Seal of the United States. For rooms in private homes he has designed window trim and decoration to complement objects in the room, from antique fireplace mantels to Art Deco furniture.

At the Mount Vernon-like house it's something of a shock to see that column capitals of a great southwest-facing portico have rotted after just a few years' exposure, for reasons that are not entirely clear. The problem is uncharacteristic of Greenberg's work, and it seems to grieve him, reinforcing his belief that when architects and their clients aim for high quality, "nothing can be taken for granted."

In many of Greenberg's buildings, ornamentation swells to exaggerated dimensions. The keystones he used in refashioning the Fifth Avenue façade of the Bergdorf Goodman store in New York and for window and door surrounds on some of his houses are oversized. Greenberg savors robustness. Sometimes the beefed-up proportions are essential if the house is to hold its own against its furnishings. In the estate house the emphatic ornamentation makes an effective counterpoint to the owner's intensely colored Andy Warhol prints and other vibrant modern art. Some photographs of the interior suggest that this artwork makes a calculated mockery of the architect's hallowed classicism. But when you're in one of the rooms it becomes evident that the vigorous architecture is not outdone by the paintings on the walls. Indeed, Greenberg argues that his success in marrying modern art to classical interiors demonstrates just how adaptable the classical tradition is.

His houses—and some of his other work, such as the Secretary of State's office, which he designed during George Shultz's tenure—feature secret compartments and discreet storage

panels, useful for keeping television sets and modern electronic gear out of sight. Greenberg's staff supplied a hundred and fifty pages of detailed drawings to the contractors who worked on the Mount Vernon-like house. "We locate every light switch, every wall plug," he says. "Full knowledge of how all the parts go together makes for a happy builder. A happy builder gives you a better job." Houses require so much effort that Greenberg tries to have no more than two under way at a time—one in construction, the other on the drawing board.

CLASSICAL ARCHITECTS remain a tiny group, although they are more numerous than they were five or ten years ago. A steady stream of young graduates from around the country, eager to learn classical design, find work in Greenberg's New Haven office—it will be moved within two years to New York, closer to his commissions—and in his more recently opened office in Washington, D.C. (Greenberg now has about thirty people on his staff.) Most classicists, including Greenberg, don't want to be seen as the latest architectural trend. Rather, they view themselves as part of a majestic continuum that has enriched Western architecture for more than two thousand years—a continuum disrupted only by twentieth-century modernism, which turned its back on the past. Classicism offers them a connection to the West's most extraordinary accomplishments. There is, however, a more melancholy truth. As Thomas Fisher observed in *Progressive Architecture*, the classicism that Greenberg employs so skillfully is the architectural equivalent of Latin, a language with the potential for eloquence but one that has dropped out of currency. Many admire it, but few are fluent in it.

Contemporary architects are especially reluctant to talk about beauty. In ten years of attending public lectures at various architectural schools, rarely have I heard a speaker utter the words "beauty" and "beautiful." Greenberg, once described as "America's most avant-garde architect who is also a traditionalist"—a description he relishes—is a man of older, more accommodating ways. "I want to build beautiful buildings," Greenberg says, "buildings that are sexy and sensuous and that fit the client like a suit." □

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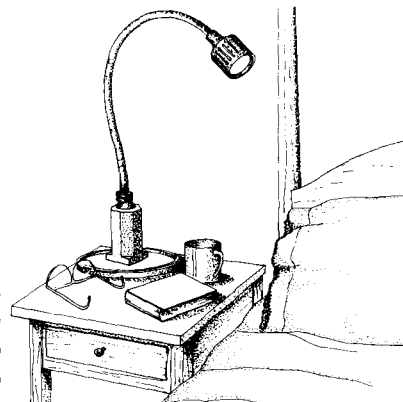
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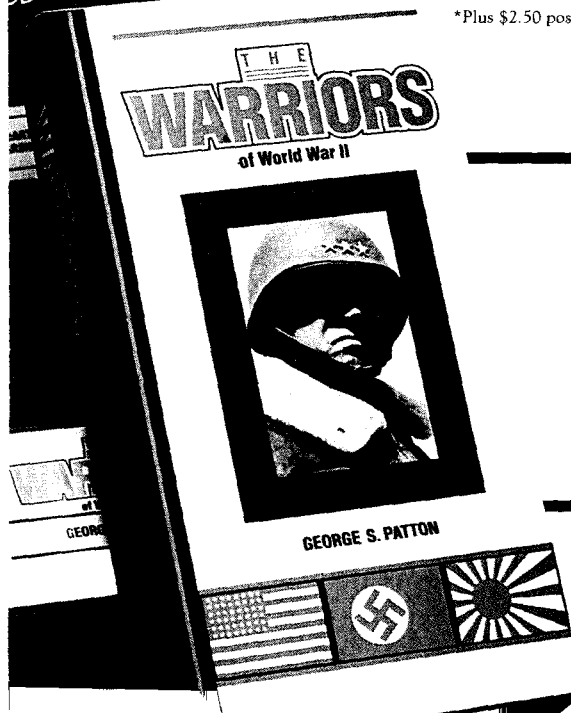
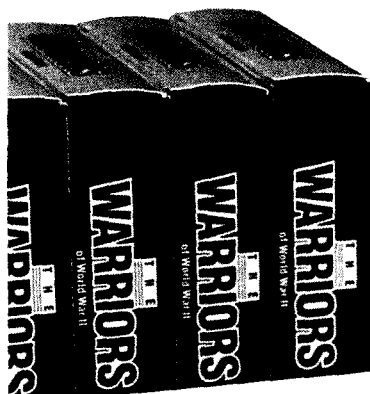
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Strangers in Paradise

The innocent bliss of a Malaysian vacation

by James Fallows

MALAYSIA IS OFF the track for most Americans, and few end up there except when heading someplace else in Southeast Asia. Last summer my wife and I were at a resort, along with 600 other vacationers, on the Malaysian east coast. Before the evening variety-show entertainment the emcee worked up the crowd with a standard routine: Let's hear it for the people from . . . AUSTRALIA!!! (Huge cheer.) Is anyone here from . . . JAPAN!!! (Louder still.) He went on to Hong Kong, Luxembourg, and New Zealand, and didn't even mention the United States.

Envious of Thailand's success in attracting some three million visitors, including a good many tourists from the United States, during Visit Thailand Year, three years ago, Malaysia has declared 1990 to be Visit Malaysia Year. It will be an uphill struggle to match Thailand. Thailand is larger, more populous, culturally richer, and simply more romantic than Malaysia. Although the Visit Thailand Year organizers didn't stress this in their ads, Bangkok's well-deserved reputation as the city where nothing is taboo adds buoyancy to the Thai tourist trade. (If it were possible for U.S. conventioners

to get to Bangkok easily, Las Vegas wouldn't have a chance.)

The tender, slightly innocent nature of Malaysia's charms makes me feel protective of the country, and hopeful that enough outsiders will discover it to make Visit Malaysia Year a success. Having lived in Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur, very happily for two years, I feel like the parent of a plain but good-hearted child, hoping others will pay attention long enough to appreciate the wonderful qualities inside. Since there are so many things to see in the vicinity, it would probably not make sense to come all the way

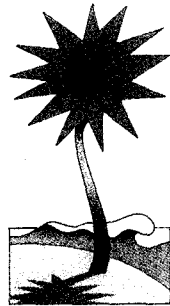
across the Pacific to Malaysia without also seeing Singapore, Indonesia, or the inevitable Thailand. But it would be a shame to make the trip without devoting a week or two to Malaysia itself.

What would you do there? If you're a naturalist or a trekker, you might head into the wild rain forests of Sabah and Sarawak, the remote Malaysian states on the island of Borneo. I have never been to those states and don't know much about them. But by plane, car, train, and boat my family explored most of the states of peninsular Malaysia, between Thailand to the north and Singapore to the south, and we ran out of time before we ran out of destinations.

Travel in Malaysia is about as free of annoyances as it can be in an exotic country. The hotels are usually clean, the people are pleasant, and the food is a combination of Malay, Indian, and Chinese cuisines that made me look forward to mealtimes more avidly than I ever have except once when sailing on the *Queen Elizabeth II*. Everything is cheap. English is spoken widely in all the cities. (Like the English of West Africa or the Caribbean, the "Straits English" generally spoken in Malaysia and Singapore takes a while for American-English speakers to understand. Coping with it is a first step toward learning Chinese, because it has the rhythm and tone pattern of southern Chinese dialects, with English words stuck in.) Except in the hill-station resorts in the country's central highlands, the weather is invariably humid and hot. In the big cities it rains torrentially late most afternoons and is sunny the rest of the day. The beach resorts on the east coast are deserted during the monsoon season, from November through February.

Before you go, you should read Anthony Burgess's *The Long Day Wanes: A Malayan Trilogy* and Somerset Maugham's story "The Letter," which is based on a murder in Kuala Lumpur. Noel Barber's *The War of the Running Dogs* describes the 1950s guerrilla campaign known as the Malayan Emergency, and Mary McMinnies's novel *The Flying Fox* is set at the same time. While you're in Malaysia, you should be sure to buy all the books you can find by the brilliant satirical cartoonist known as Lat. Some of his newspaper cartoons rely on inside jokes about lo-

cal politics, but the books *Kampung Boy* and *Town Boy*, which describe his boyhood in the countryside and his bitter-sweet departure for the city, have universal appeal. (They are the Malaysian counterparts to Russell Baker's *Growing Up*.)



NOW YOUR travel plan. On the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, looking out toward Sumatra

across the Straits of Malacca, are two delightful cities, Malacca and Penang. Say what you will about the evils of imperialism, it did leave Asia dotted with a number of gracefully designed cities that combine European architecture with Asian flair. The great enemy of these cities architecturally is economic progress, which is why stagnant Hanoi has retained so much more of its colonial architecture than the boomtown of Singapore has. Malacca is sleepy enough to have preserved not only the centuries-old forts of the Dutch, Portuguese, and British conquerors but also a large undisturbed tract of classic "shophouse" architecture. This is the standard urban structure throughout Southeast Asia—row upon row of two-story whitewashed buildings with red-tiled roofs, open fronts, and apartments for the owners in the rear. When I strolled past the antique stores or the Chinese-medicine displays in Malacca's shophouses, or sat with my family in a shophouse café watching cooks fry up *char key teow*, a kind of paella with noodles, in big black woks, I felt as if Joseph Conrad, or perhaps Lord Jim himself, must soon turn up. Many of the old Chinese Malaysians who work in the shops do their part to sustain the tintype atmosphere by wearing shapeless Bermuda shorts and billowy basketball-style undershirts. Malacca is about an hour's drive (or bus ride) south of Kuala Lumpur on a relatively modern and safe highway.

Penang is at the northern end of the Malaysian west coast. You can fly there from Kuala Lumpur for about \$30, or get a first-class seat for the six-hour train ride for about the same price. In principle you could ride all the way from Singapore to Bangkok in about

thirty hours on the same train, but unless you're a zealot for either trains or views of rubber plantations, the Singapore-K.L. or K.L.-Penang leg will be enough. Penang is more bustling and therefore less nostalgic than Malacca, but it is full of imposing colonial structures, including the Malaysian hotel you are least likely to forget. On the waterfront, in the district called Georgetown, sits the Eastern & Oriental, or E&O, Hotel, which was the height of elegance at about the time the *Titanic* was and is now slightly better preserved. Naturally it has a Somerset Maugham Suite, where we stayed, plus ballrooms with sky-high ceilings and a hundred other reminders of what the gracious life was like long ago. Across the eight-mile-long bridge to Penang Island are the modern expressions of the gracious life, fancy (yet inexpensive, \$60-\$80 per night) beach resorts such as the Golden Sands and the Mutari Hotel. The water is flat and surflless, but warm and soothing to the soul. A tip: don't listen to the paraglide operators on Penang's beaches, who for \$15 will strap you into a parachute harness and tow you behind their speedboats. I nearly died from fear the time I tried it, and the next day a woman from Hong Kong nearly died from loss of blood. The tow rope somehow got wrapped around her leg, and it neatly stripped off the calf muscle when the boat sped up and pulled the rope taut.

On the eastern coast of Malaysia there are no cities to speak of, and no para-gliders that I have seen. The coast is a seemingly endless band of smooth white beach, facing warm blue water and lined with palm trees. When you walk along these beaches you understand why thinkers like Marx and Einstein came from countries with bad weather. It's hard to work up a sweeping theory of the world when your mind keeps interrupting to say, "Look! This is paradise!"

The state of Trengganu, on the northern part of the east coast, is famous within Malaysia as the stronghold of fundamentalist Muslims. On a drive through the *kampungs*, or villages, with their distinctive wooden houses on stilts, virtually every woman you see is wearing an ankle-length skirt and a long head cloth.

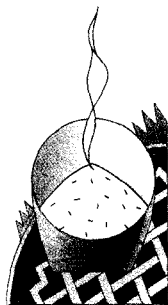
The most sublimely restful resort in Trengganu is Tanjung Jara Beach Ho-

tel, done in traditional Malay-style architecture and situated on a cove of the South China Sea. The rooms are paneled with rich, burnished teak so beautiful that despite the sand and sea outside, I was tempted to spend the whole time in the room. (Teak and its related jungle hardwoods are often on one's mind in Malaysia, and not always in so pleasant a form. Huge logging trucks, barreling recklessly down the roads of Trengganu and the neighboring state of Pahang, often made us wonder which would die first—the rain forest at the hands of the loggers, or us in a crash. I don't mean to make light of the logging question, but for the moment my point is simply that you should fly to your east-coast destinations, on Malaysian Airlines System's inexpensive and comfortable flights. You'll be sorry if you rent a car and try to drive.)

A few miles north of Tanjong Jara is one of the world's three nesting sites for leatherback turtles, at Rantau Abang. Up and down the coasts are landing sites for refugee boats from Vietnam. I have not been to see it, but one resort in Trengganu has converted an old refugee boat into a beach bar. Blanche d'Alpuget's novel *Turtle Beach*, which seems impossible to buy in Malaysia, centers on the landing of refugees and reptiles in Trengganu. Two hundred miles down the coast, in the freer and easier state of Johor, is the small port town of Mersing. This is one of those places, like Independence, Missouri, in the old days or Chiang Mai, Thailand, now, that exists mainly as a jumping-off point. Its docks are jammed with trawlers heading for the dozen islands that lie offshore. The best-known and most extensively developed is Pulau Tioman (*pulau* means "island"), with modern resorts and a small airport. But, while our children were at a Robinson Crusoe-style summer camp on Pulau Babi Besar, my wife and I had the good luck to find Pulau Rawa, a small kidney-bean-shaped island an hour's boat ride from Mersing. Rawa is just developed enough to have its own generator to provide lights in the evening, and a big open-air restaurant where curries, noodles, and fish are served. There are a dozen wooden bungalows right on the beach, the restaurant and bathhouse, and almost nothing else. Immediately offshore is a coral reef full of improbably colored fish. While diving off

Rawa, I saw something I had dreamed of since my early days as a *Sea Hunt* viewer: a giant clam, its shell looking about six feet in diameter, its mantle oozing with an evil green pearlescence from the gap between its rippled halves. Daringly I brushed my hand past the jaws (as I thought of them), to see if they'd snap shut the way they do in undersea-disaster shows. Nothing happened. I assumed that by the time clams get this big, their shells are so heavy and arthritic that they're practically welded in place.

Staying on Rawa costs about \$30 a night, including the price of meals. The resort is owned and operated by a branch of the royal family in the state of Johor. The family's local representative is the Tengku (Princess) Maria, who drifts around Rawa in her muumuu, feeding her pet goats and civet cats and urging guests to be careful not to damage the coral.



WHEN YOU'RE ready to leave Malaysia, you'll go back to Kuala Lumpur for your flight home. Like Kansas City, perhaps, or Osaka, K.L. grows on you, and is a nicer city to live in than to visit. But even two or three days there will have their rewards. You should dine one night at the Colosseum Café, a Maugham-era dive where ageless Chinese waiters dressed in white bustle around with trays of meat. (Order the "Sizzling Steak Special." You'll see why when it arrives.) The next night you should go to the Coq d'Or, a quasi-French restaurant in a tin baron's mansion, with another set of age-defying waiters. All your other meals you can eat at the ubiquitous outdoor stalls, which sell Indian *roti canai* (a kind of exquisitely oily fried bread) and Malay *nasi goreng* (fried rice) for less money than you'd spend in the United States for a Coke.

The mosque known as Masjid Jame, at the junction of two rivers near the center of the town, is a cool-looking lattice of pink sandstone, with gushing fountains in which men bathe themselves before prayers. The prevailing good taste of the local architecture is so powerful that even the American em-

bassy looks nice. It is a handsome building with a red-tiled roof, a big brother to the local shophouses. On a narrow street less than a mile from the embassy is the strangest building in town: the residence of a prominent politician, the Tengku (Prince) Razaleigh, who has built for himself a home modeled on the Washington White House.

If you should visit Kuala Lumpur late this month, near the time of the Hindu ceremony of Thaipusam, your trip will be anything but tame. The ceremony takes place at Batu Caves, a thousand-foot-high limestone outcropping five miles north of town. The Batu Caves formation is inherently spooky, like Australia's Ayers Rock; it might be named Devil's Pedestal if it were in the American West. The caverns are used year-round as Hindu shrines and always smell of incense and the sanpangita flowers presented as offerings. Through the outside gardens roam grotesque sacred animals, such as a six-legged Brahma cow (the extra two come out of the hump).

In the month before Thaipusam hundreds of young Hindu males fast through the daylight hours, sitting cross-legged on temple floors. On the evening before the ceremony they disrobe, dress in white loincloths, and start chewing the betel nuts that will later make their saliva look like blood oozing from their mouths. They gather the friends and relatives who will offer support during the Thaipusam ordeal, and begin walking to the caves.

Around midnight the Thaipusam penitents gather along the sluggish brown Styx-like river that snakes around the base of Batu Caves. Oil lamps flicker at ground level, making it hard to see what is happening more than three or four feet away. The penitents bring out their equipment. Gleaming metal spears, six feet long and an inch thick. Big steel grappling hooks, attached to long reins. Super-sized silver needles twelve inches long. The penitents begin dancing, often with their heads held back and their eyes rolling. Their supporters chant *vel! vel! vel!* (victory!) in a faster and faster rhythm, building to a frenzy or trance. A dancer grasps a spear and waves it over his head as he dances. He hears *vel! vel! vel! vel! vel!*

If I told you the rest, you wouldn't believe me. You'd better go see for yourself. □

Books

Graphic Details

by Cullen Murphy

THE PENCIL: A History
of Design and Circumstance
by Henry Petroski.
Knopf, \$25.00.

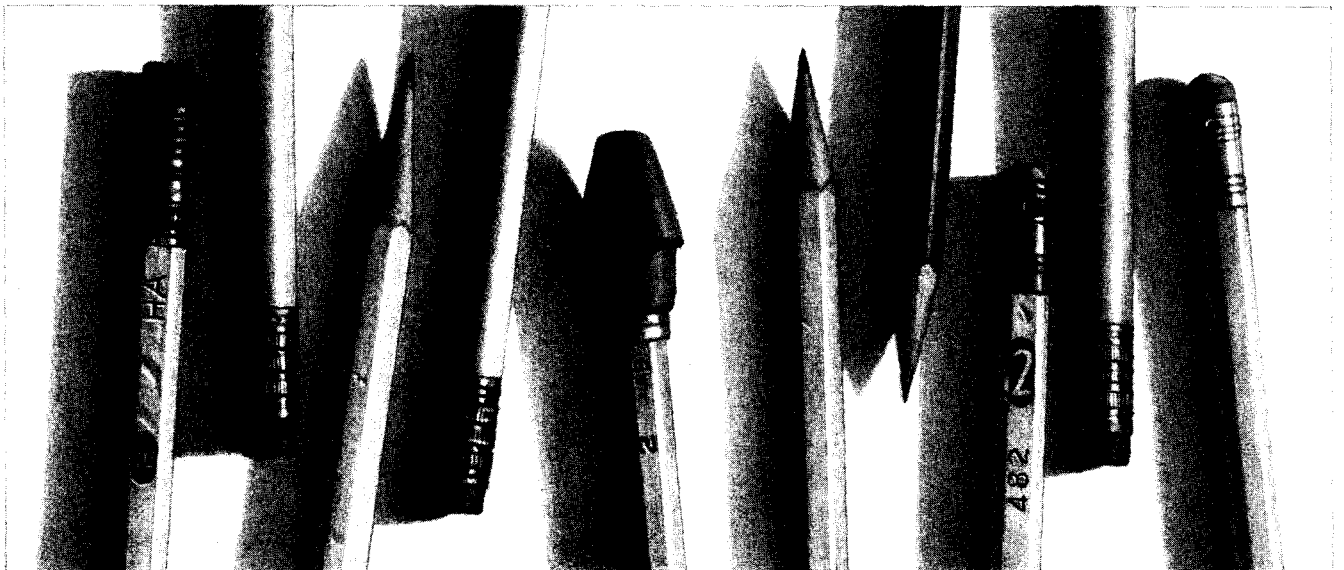
THERE IS A TYPE of book—often merely a stunt, sometimes a tour de force—in which the author crawls inside a subject of seemingly limited interest, as if on a dare, and then pushes out in all directions until unexpected and fascinating connections are made with the larger world. Perhaps the most famous example of the genre is Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, a book ostensibly about a pond. Page Smith and Charles Daniel gave us another example fifteen years ago in *The Chicken Book*, which dispenses copious amounts of science and lore, along with valuable lessons in the historian's craft. More recently we have had Tracy Kidder's *Soul of a New Machine*, which shines into a variety of corners while focusing chiefly on the inner life of a computer. Now Henry Petroski, an engineer who teaches at Duke University, has produced *The Pencil*, a serious and charming history of an item most of us take

completely for granted. "Even what can appear to be the most common, small, and simple of objects," he writes, "can reveal itself to be on its own terms as complex and as grand as a space shuttle or a great suspension bridge." Petroski contends that the pencil may usefully serve as a paradigm of all engineering, and he argues his case with wry humor and an amplitude of anecdotal evidence drawn from many centuries and continents. *The Pencil* is that great rarity, a book that will appeal to ordinary readers and yet seems destined as well to become a minor classic in academe.

THE WORD *pencil* is derived from the Latin *penicillum*, which in Roman times referred to a fine brush used for writing; looking in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, I saw to my great surprise that "a brush of hair or bristles" was still the first meaning given for *pencil*. The pencil we use today resulted from the quest, pursued since ancient times, for a written line that was both dark and dry. The *penicillum* provided darkness along with temporary wetness, while another Roman instrument, the stylus, which was typically made from lead or lead alloy, provided dryness along with exceeding lightness. From Roman times through the Renaissance people experimented with a variety of unsatis-

factory writing technologies; their stories have about them the same sense of marvel and poignancy of stories about flying machines before the Wright brothers.

Then came the discovery, under Seatoller Fell, near Keswick, Cumberland, in the Lake District of northwestern England, of a dry, dark substance called plumbago, now known technically as graphite but commonly called lead. Just when the discovery occurred (supposedly after the uprooting of an ash tree in a gale) remains a matter of speculation, but it certainly happened before the publication, in 1565, of a book on fossils by Konrad Gesner ("the father of zoology" and "the German Pliny"), which for some reason contains an annotated drawing of a piece of graphite inserted in a wooden holder—the first known depiction of a pencil. Cumberland graphite's excellent properties, including the fact that it could be easily erased, ensured a lively market, and graphite, attached to some sort of holder in various ad hoc and inventive ways, was soon the medium of choice throughout Europe for drawing and casual writing. By the mid-seventeenth century cottage factories in England and Germany—a prototype of the garage workshops in which a fancier type of word processor has come into being—were manufacturing crude versions of a standardized



pencil, one in which a long, thin piece of graphite was encased in a piece of wood.

Petroski has a pretty good sense of what his readers want to know and when they want to know it, for at this point in his narrative he stops and asks, "How do they get the lead into the pencil?" I had always thought that a tunnel was somehow dug through the shaft (or "infrastructure," as Petroski calls it), and the lead was snugly inserted afterward, but making a pencil in this way turns out to be the industry's version of finding the Holy Grail. In fact every pencil consists of two grooved pieces of wood. The lead, which was originally square or rectangular in cross-section, is glued into the groove on one piece, and the second piece completes the sandwich. This was at first delicate work, the province of joiners and cabinetmakers, who made each pencil individually. Eventually the task was mechanized, with many grooves being cut on long boards and the individual pencils cut out only after the top piece had been glued down over several dozen leads. The prevalence of the hexagonal pencil, now standard, had everything to do with mass production: the shape allowed more pencils to be cut out of a given block of wood than a circular design would have, and it was still fairly comfortable to hold.

PETROSKI EMPHASIZES time and again the fickle role played in engineering by both the abundance and the dearth of raw materials. The modern pencil, for example, was made possible by the discovery of high-quality graphite; once such graphite became widely available, experimentation with alternative fillings virtually stopped. A sudden shortage of graphite was responsible for the next breakthrough. In the 1790s Britain and France went to war, and the French as a result lost access to supplies of graphite from Cumberland. As the availability of pencils in France began rapidly to diminish, hampering education, commerce, and war, the government launched a kind of Manhattan Project to find a new way to produce them. In charge of this effort was a young engineer named Nicolas-Jacques Conté. Conté started experimenting with the many widely available grades of graphite that were not of pencil quality, and

was able to remove impurities by grinding the graphite into a fine powder. He then mixed the pure graphite dust with clay and water, and allowed the mixture to harden in molds; the hardened leads were later fired at a high temperature. Conté's process, which succeeded wonderfully, is the basis for pencil-making today.

Fluctuations in the graphite supply led directly to another innovation in pencil design: the adoption of yellow as the standard pencil color. By the early nineteenth century the graphite mines in Cumberland were pretty nearly exhausted, and while the Conté process enabled manufacturers to make good pencils out of impure graphite, the search was on for a new source of the finer stuff. It was found in 1847 in Siberia, near the Chinese border, and the German company A. W. Faber acquired exclusive rights to it. In its advertising Faber repeatedly reminded customers that it alone had access to the very best graphite, from the Far East. The other pencil companies responded by producing lines of pencils with suggestive names like Mongol and Mikado, and they further implied an Oriental association by painting the pencils yellow. Today three out of four pencils are yellow. (The American-made Mikado was renamed the Mirado after Pearl Harbor.)

One of the great names in the history of pencil-making is that of Henry David Thoreau, whose father was in the pencil business, and who was responsible for the first high-quality pencil manufactured in America. Having no apparent knowledge of Conté's process (pencil-makers are famously secretive), Thoreau by 1844 had developed a pencil lead made from ground graphite and clay. By varying the amount of clay he also produced pencils with a range of hardnesses, and he distinguished among them by assigning the pencils numbers or letters. With this achievement behind him Thoreau abandoned the pencil business and went to live in the woods at Walden Pond; in the celebrated list he drew up of the things one needs on a wilderness excursion—"matches (some also in a small vial in the waistcoat pocket); soap, two pieces"—he neglected to mention the very object that he wrote the list with, and that Ralph Waldo Emerson recalled his never being without.

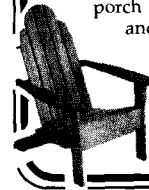
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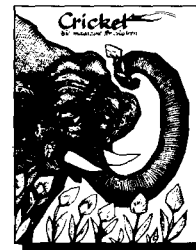
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**GOING
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by Madison Smartt Bell

"Nobody quite knew what Peter Jackson practiced on those boys, but whatever it was it seemed to work." A short story.

AS NOTED, *The Pencil* is a book about engineering, and one is never far in these pages from discussions of raw materials, physical laws, economics and marketing, and the processes of discovery and invention. Sensible observations are strewn about matter-of-factly. ("Engineering," Petroski writes, "can be its own worst publicist, because the more it succeeds in making a product or a service that is reliable and efficient, the more engineering itself becomes virtually invisible and seemingly humdrum.")

What makes this book especially delightful is the author's propensity to doodle, as it were—to allow his thoughts to stray into the tangential, and dally. He devotes one excursion to the rotary pencil sharpener, noting that its proper functioning depended on the development of a circular lead that was placed *exactly* in the middle of the wooden shaft. (Unless it was, the pencil could not be made to come to a true point, or would break during sharpening.) He devotes another to the advent of pencils tipped with erasers, which were condemned by some educators as inappropriate for use in schools. (One publication put the argument this way: "It might almost be laid down as a general law, that the easier errors may be corrected, the more errors will be made.") Yet another excursion takes us to the Soviet Union in the 1920s, where the young Armand Hammer reaped a handsome profit by manufacturing with Russian labor cheap pencils for export. (When the plant came under Soviet control, in 1930, it was named the Sacco and Vanzetti Pencil Factory.)

One is left in the end with great admiration for those who have played significant roles in the history of pencil-making. Their achievement, as Petroski notes, is not inconsiderable. They created an object that must be sturdy while in use but whose wood must be easy to carve away, that must be comfortable in the hand and produce a line that pleases the eye; an object that is manufactured by the hundreds of millions, adheres to rigorous technical standards, is available for pennies, and underlies much of our science, literature, and art. "No artifact is perfect," Petroski writes near the end of his study. But I had the distinct impression that he was tempted to make an exception. □

The Book on Miles

by Francis Davis

MILES: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY
by Miles Davis.
Simon & Schuster, \$22.95.

IN MILES: *The Autobiography* the trumpeter Miles Davis remembers his excitement at hearing the Billy Eckstine Orchestra, with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, in a St. Louis nightclub in 1944. It was his first in-person exposure to bebop, and also his baptism by fire as a musician—just eighteen at the time, he was pressed into service as an emergency fill-in. "The way that band was playing music—that was *all* I wanted to hear."

Davis's reaction was typical of that of most young musicians in the 1940s. What thrilled them about bebop was its impossible combination of the breakneck and the Byzantine. It was all they wanted to hear and all they wanted to play. But an early mark of Davis's singularity was that soon after becoming Gillespie's protégé and Parker's sideman, he also became their loyal opposition. "Diz and Bird [Parker] played a lot of real fast notes and chord changes because that's the way they heard everything; that's the way their voices were: fast, up in the upper register," Davis observes in *Miles*, which was written in collaboration with the poet and journalist Quincy Troupe. "Their concept of music was *more* rather than *less*. I personally wanted to cut the notes down."

Davis's entire career can be seen as an ongoing critique of bebop: the origins of "cool" jazz (his collaborations with Gil Evans in the late 1940s), hard bop, or "funky" (his 1954 recording of "Walkin'"), modal improvisation (the track "Milestones" in 1958 and the 1959 album *Kind of Blue*), and jazz-rock fusion (*In a Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew*, both recorded in 1969) can be traced to his efforts to tear bebop down to its essentials. Unable as a younger musician to play "fast," or "in the upper register," Davis became an innovator out of necessity.

His decision, in 1969, to court a younger audience by playing rock ven-

ues, adding amplified instruments to his ensemble, and cranking up both the volume and the beat, also amounted to a critique of modern jazz, which he felt had become tired and inbred. So, in effect, did his withdrawal from the recording studio and public performance from 1975 to 1980, years in which "sex and drugs took the place that music had occupied in my life until then and I did both of them around the clock." He barely touched his horn in these years, but he haunted jazz with his silence.

Two groups of listeners now feel that Davis has sold them out: jazz fans of a certain age who have never forgiven him for going electric, and the rock audience that discovered him with *Bitches Brew* and—try as it might—can't get with the slick techno-funk he has been recording since *The Man With the Horn*, in 1981. But the audience he has his sights on now, although he's unlikely to reach it without a hit single, is the audience that grooves to Prince and Michael Jackson, and commercial survival doesn't seem to be his only motivation—ego, racial identity, and a desire for eternal youth (or continuing relevance) all seem to be mixed up in it.

For many of his more worshipful fans, of all ages and races, Davis's music has always been just one component of a mystique that also involves his beautiful women, his up-to-the-minute wardrobe, his expensive taste in sports cars, and his scowling black anger: his celebrity boils down to an insider's life-style and an outsider's stance. His magnetism is so powerful that fans who haven't liked anything he's done in years continue to buy his records and to attend his concerts, irrationally hoping for a reversal of form.

On stage he remains an electrifying presence, although you wonder now when you go to hear him (as you do with the seventy-one-year-old Dizzy Gillespie, but for a different reason) not how well he'll play but how much. He has become a kind of roving conductor, walking from sideman to sideman, describing what he wants from them with a pump of his shoulders or a wiggle of his hips, blowing riffs into their faces and letting them pick it up from there. He still turns his back on the audience for much of the show, as he was infamous for doing in the 1950s and 1960s. The difference is that now

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Israel and the Media

Are current events in Israel getting fair coverage?

In December of 1987, an Israeli civilian was stabbed by Arabs in the Gaza territory, administered by Israel. On the following day, four Gaza Arabs were killed by an automobile driven by an Israeli. The two events were totally unrelated. Yet, the rumor spread that the Arab deaths were revenge murders by the Israelis. Rioting broke out and spread into Judea-Sumaria (the "West Bank"), also administered by Israel. It was the beginning of the "intifada," which still goes on. The media have covered and continue to cover this uprising extensively. Are they doing it fairly?

What are the facts?

■ The conflict between the Israeli government and the Arabs in the areas administered by Israel, the so-called "intifada," is essentially a minor regional one. It does not compare in scope, in violence and in the number of people killed or injured to the many other conflicts going on in the world right at this time, such as the conflict between the Basques and Spain; between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland; and between Moslems, Hindus and Sikhs in India. And there are many more. Just as with the Arab-Israel conflict, no easy or early solution seems at hand.

■ Yet, while the "intifada" is only one of many regional conflicts, the volume of its coverage in the media has made it appear to be a major world event. There are over 250 press and t.v. reporters accredited in Israel, a tiny country the size of New Jersey and with only half the population of New Jersey. This large media contingent is second only in number to that of Washington and Moscow—and less than that of such key news centers as London, Paris, Bonn, New Delhi, Peking or Tokyo. Naturally, all of these reporters must produce daily stories in order to justify their presence. This results in much journalistic overkill. *The Washington Post*, for instance, reports in an internal audit that . . . during a 5-month period in 1988, they published over 300,000 words on the "intifada," more than two articles daily, one-quarter of which appeared on the front page. That was the most intense coverage by the *Post* of any continuing story. In contrast, when in one day, 65 Shi'ites were killed in one of the brotherly battles in neighboring Lebanon, the *Post* gave that only 600 words, in an article on page 15.

■ But it isn't just the intensity of coverage that casts serious doubt about the fairness of the media. It's primarily the slant that is being given to the news, both in the print media and on television. Television, especially, thrives on "action bites," short dramatic scenes with potential to get the viewer involved. For instance, we see over and over again pictures of

teenage boys throwing rocks at Israel soldiers, and the soldiers chasing those teenagers with guns and clubs. That inevitably creates the impression of Israel as the bully or the Goliath, and of the "Palestinians" as defenseless Davids. The opposite is true, of course. Israel is a beleaguered country surrounded by implacable enemies, who incessantly plot its destruction. The "intifada" is part of that never-ending war.

■ The media do not show the hundreds of Israeli soldiers and civilians who have been grievously wounded and in some cases killed by rocks and gasoline bombs. They do not show the Arabs setting countless arson fires, in which over 25,000 acres of forest—every tree having lovingly been planted by hand—have been destroyed. They do not show the attacks on Jewish farms, the wanton destruction of industrial and public service facilities, the fire bombing of hundreds of buses, and the ruthless killing of livestock. They do not show the PLO terror aimed at the "Palestinians" themselves. In the last seventeen months of the "intifada" dozens of Palestinian Arabs have been murdered by the PLO, hundreds injured, many critically. This campaign of intimidation has increased since Yasir Arafat allegedly renounced terrorism.

■ In the few cases in which fuller coverage of the conflict was attempted on t.v., such coverage usually did turn out to be more "show-biz" than serious reporting. ABC's reportage "Six Days Plus Twenty Years" was so blatantly anti-Israel in tone that Arab countries rushed to use it as a propaganda film. Peter Jennings on ABC insistently perpetuates the odious comparison of Israel with South Africa. TV interviews with people in the territories invariably show reasonably middle class intellectuals and professionals with whom the American viewer can identify—never the arsonists, the bus bombers and the throwers of Molotov cocktails. The occasional Israeli spokesman that gets trotted out is almost always a member of the radical left or of the so-called "Peace Now" movement, quite unrepresentative of mainline Israeli thinking.

The media do not give the "intifada" fair coverage. It's partly the sheer volume of the coverage, which gives this minor regional conflict perceived importance that it doesn't have. It also lies in the persistent anti-Israel slant that permeates the reporting in all media. Finally, the media, almost without exception, focus on the immediate "drama" and do not explore the history and background of this conflict. The most important point, always omitted, is that the conflict between Israel and the "Palestinians" is not the core problem in the area. The core problem is the unremitting obsession of the Arab states to destroy Israel, their refusal to make peace with it, or to lift the economic boycott against Israel—regardless of what disposition may ultimately be made of the "West Bank." Israel, more even than other beleaguered pro-Western nations, is the target of disinformation and unfair reporting. Largely because it is a dependable friend and ally of the United States, the Jewish state is another victim of the "blame America first" bias in the media.

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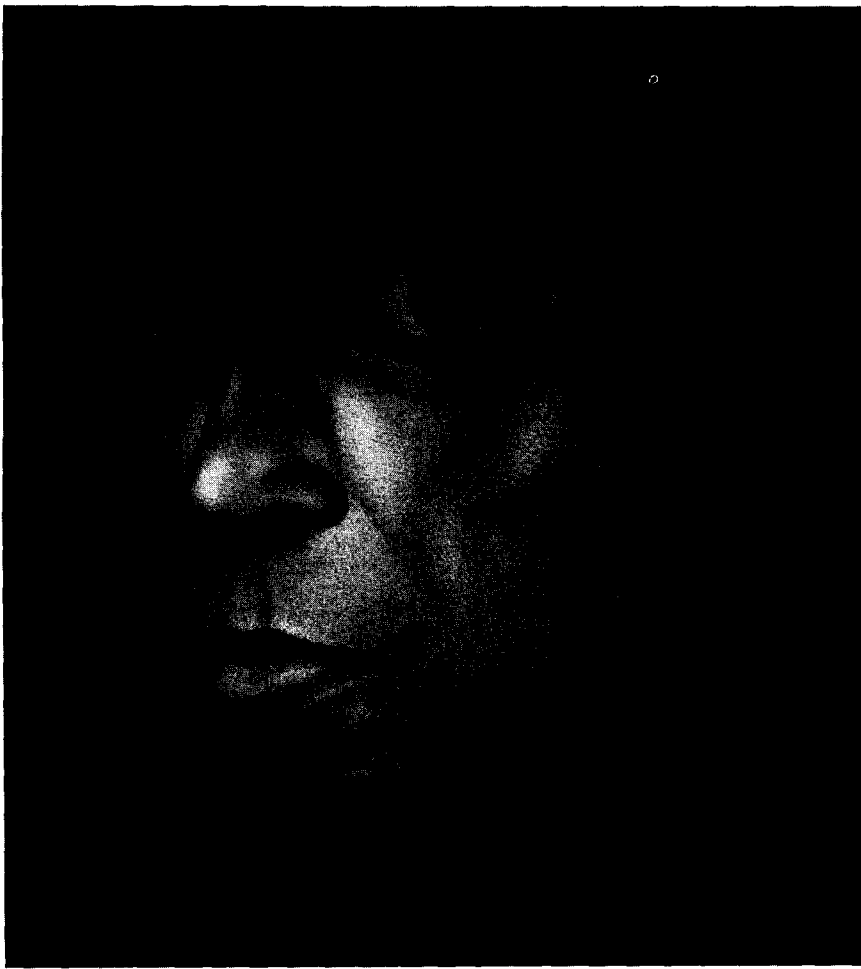
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he has a wireless microphone on his horn which allows him to be heard clearly with his back turned—and that audiences would be disappointed, at this point, if he failed to strike his iconographic pose. Though his shows are never boring, you're not quite sure how you feel about them afterward. Is Davis admirable, as his apologists would have it, for refusing to rest on his laurels—for keeping up with the latest black musical and sartorial fashions? Or is there something pathetic about the sight of a sixty-three-year-old man in clogs, parachute pants, and jheri curls shaking his fanny to a younger generation's beat?

"When I hear jazz musicians today playing all those same licks we used to play so long ago, I feel sad for them," he writes.

Most people my age like old, stuffy furniture. I like the new Memphis style of sleek high-tech stuff. . . . Bold colors and long, sleek, spare lines. I don't like a lot of clutter or a lot of furniture either. I like contemporary stuff. I have to always be on

the cutting edge of things because that's just the way I am and have always been.

Anyone this vigilant about staying on the cutting edge is chasing trends—not starting them, as Davis did in jazz from the late forties to the early seventies (*Bitches Brew* and most of the double albums that followed it, though turbid in retrospect, were undeniably influential at the time).

DAVIS'S MAJOR accomplishment of recent years isn't any of his recordings but *Miles*, which enjoys an obvious advantage over the Davis biographies by Ian Carr, Jack Chambers, Eric Nisenson, and Bill Cole. Without the full involvement of their subject, these were essentially turntable companions—critical guides to Davis's work within a biographical framework. But with *Miles*, Davis proves to be his own most perceptive critic (at least about his music before 1969), and the book is so successful in capturing Davis's voice (including his

incessant, if tonally varied, use of profanity) that the odd line that sounds like the work of his collaborator (as when, for example, Davis supposedly resorts to quoting a jazz critic to describe the dramatic contrast between his style and that of his former sideman John Coltrane) calls for a double take.

"The challenge . . . is to see how inventive you can become melodically," Davis writes, offering the clearest explanation I have ever read of the advantages of improvising on modes or scales rather than chord changes. "It's not like when you base stuff on chords, and you know at the end of thirty-two bars that the chords have run out and there's nothing to do but repeat what you've done with variations." *Kind of Blue*, which popularized modal improvisation, was the most influential jazz album of its period, but it was a disappointment of sorts for Davis, he writes. The sound he wanted on *Kind of Blue*, and feels that he didn't quite achieve, was that of the "finger piano" (probably an African thumb piano) that accompanied a performance he saw by an African dance troupe. Though Davis himself doesn't make the connection, this provides an unexpected rationale for the three electric pianos that phase in and out behind the horns on *In a Silent Way*.

He writes about fellow musicians with an eye for detail that brings them into photograph-like focus. On Gil Evans, for example:

When I first met him, he used to come to listen to Bird when I was in the band. He'd come in with a whole bag of "horseradishes"—that's what we used to call radishes—that he'd be eating with salt. Here was this tall, thin, white guy from Canada who was hipper than hip. . . . But bringing "horseradishes" to nightclubs and eating them out of a bag with salt, and a white boy? Here was Gil on fast 52nd Street with all these super hip black musicians wearing peg legs and zoot suits, and here he was dressed in a cap. Man, he was something else.

While acknowledging his genius, Davis characterizes Charlie Parker as "greedy," a man who "was always trying to con or beat you out of something to support his drug habit."

Bird always said he hated the idea of being thought of as just an enter-

tainer, but . . . he was becoming a spectacle. I didn't like whites walking into the club where we were playing just to see Bird act a fool, thinking he might do something stupid.

Miles's considerable value as jazz history isn't what makes it such a page-turner. Autobiography is a problematic literary form, because it's never clear which is being submitted for the reader's approval, a book or its author. Davis writes that he loved Parker as a musician but "maybe not as a person," and the Miles Davis who emerges from *Miles*—as complex as any character in recent fiction—elicits a similar ambivalence from the reader.

His treatment of women is contemptible: he isn't averse to slugging them to keep them in line. It isn't bad enough that he talks with unconvincing remorse of hitting his own women; the story intended to illustrate Billy Eckstine's tough-guy credentials has Eckstine slapping a would-be girlfriend while Davis looks on approvingly. He is spiteful toward the actress Cicely Tyson, the most recent of his ex-wives:

Cicely has done movie and TV roles where she played an activist or something like that, a person who cared a lot about black people. Well, she ain't nothing like that. She loves to sit up with white people, loves to listen to their advice about everything and believes almost everything they tell her.

Davis's fame and his relatively privileged upbringing (his father was a dentist and an unsuccessful candidate for the Illinois state legislature) haven't spared him from injustice, such as being clubbed over the head by a white policeman after he was ordered to move on from the entrance of a New York City nightclub in which he was performing in 1959. But much of what Davis interprets as racism is his own hubris, as when he accuses white jazz critics of having written approvingly in the mid-sixties of such black avant-gardists as Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, and Archie Shepp in an effort to deflect attention from *him*. (Never mind that the critics most identified with what was then called "the New Thing" were Amiri Baraka and A. B. Spellman, both of whom are black.) He is peacock vain. He tells of admiring himself in a mirror in 1956, when

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his star was on the rise. He wasn't yet making as much money as he thought he should be, but he was looking "clean" in Brooks Brothers and custom-made Italian suits. "I felt so good that I walked to the door and forgot my trumpet."

He writes of getting together every so often with the late James Baldwin in France and "lying our asses off." You have to wonder, as you do with all autobiographies, how much deliberate lying is being done here. Probably not a lot, because for a man this caught up in his own mystique—a man fully aware that his art and life are already the stuff of legend—just telling the truth about himself as he sees it amounts to a form of self-aggrandizement. □

Brief Reviews



THE SNOWS OF YESTERYEAR by Gregor von Rezzori. Knopf, \$19.95. The subtitle of this book is "Portraits for an Autobiography," but in fact the autobiography is there. Mr. von Rezzori describes the principal figures of his youth—the grotesque but loving and beloved peasant nursemaid, the blustering huntsman father, the neurotic and unpredictable mother, the older sister who was both enemy and ally, and the German governess whose tact and good sense frequently kept the clan in order. Nothing could have kept these people entirely in order, for the Second World War had thrown them into limbo. From being members of the Austrian administrative class they had become members of a German-speaking minority in Romania, déclassé in their own view and suspect to their Romanian neighbors. Financially and socially they had gone adrift. In describing the characters and actions of his circle, the author indirectly reveals his own youthful uncertainties and discoveries, and makes clear the problems of facing a world in which nothing worked according to inherited expectation.

THE DEVIL'S MODE by Anthony Burgess. Random House, \$18.95. Mr. Burgess has a liking for history and music plus an exceptionally lively imagination. He displays these qualities in a collection of short stories that provide intelligent entertainment for readers of similar tastes. The musically illiterate may be baffled by Mallarmé's doings in Dublin, but will surely find pleasure elsewhere—if not with Attila in Rome, then with social comedy on the international circuit or with a parodied Sherlock Holmes. In "A Meeting in Valladolid," Shakespeare and company, dragged to Spain as ornaments for a diplomatic mission, suffer seasickness; indigestion; a bullfight, which Master Shakespeare declines to tolerate; audiences that do not understand English; Spanish plays that they, in turn, cannot understand; and a collision with the elderly and bad-tempered Cervantes. All these miseries are presented in twenty pages of vivid, fast-moving, elegant prose. Mr. Burgess possesses splendid abilities as an author, and one of them is a refusal to dawdle.

THE HONE & STRONG DIARIES OF OLD MANHATTAN edited by Louis Auchincloss. Abbeville, \$35.00. Philip Hone, businessman and former mayor, and George Strong, lawyer, were both interested observers of New York City and indefatigable diarists. Between them they recorded life in Manhattan from 1830 to 1874. Balls, scandals, gossip, riots, fires, epidemics, and distinguished visitors were noted, along with the authors' candid and often acid opinions. Mr. Auchincloss has made a fine selection of excerpts from Hone and Strong, whose complete works are undoubtedly more than any general reader would care to tackle, and has provided explanatory notes when necessary. One interesting aspect of the text is the difference in style between Hone (1780–1851) and Strong (1820–1875). Hone seemingly modeled his prose on that of his contemporary Washington Irving. Strong's sharper, more colloquial manner dimly foreshadows Mark Twain. The book is lavishly and appropriately illustrated with prints of the period.

THE NATURE NOTES OF AN EDWARDIAN LADY by Edith Holden. Arcade, \$22.95. Edith Holden, whose 1905 observa-

tions of flora and fauna are contained in this pretty book, was no merely amateur watercolorist. She became a professional illustrator, as she was qualified to do. Her charming paintings of birds and flowers are supported by a text that simply and gracefully evokes the English countryside where she roamed and watched, and by poems suitable to the time of year. The poems are not her own. Some are predictable—Browning on April—and some are a bit surprising. One is inclined to wonder at her mild predilection for Longfellow.

KING OF THE ROAD by Paul Hemphill. Houghton Mifflin, \$18.95. Part picaresque adventure, part psychological conflict, part forthright celebration of courage, Mr. Hemphill's excellent novel is appealing in all three areas. His major protagonist is Jake Hawkins, a resourceful, hard-drinking, and profane independent trucker who, though officially retired, insists on hitting the road again at the age of seventy. This modified Don Quixote has, as apology for Sancho Panza, his son, a semi-alcoholic who is doubtfully employed at a profoundly undistinguished institution of higher learning. Sonny is incapable of driving a truck. He has been shoved into the project by the old friend who has provided the job and who expects Sonny to keep his father out of trouble and cancel the run if things look dangerous. The poor fellow might as well be asked to dam the Mississippi in full flood. Spouting red-neck prejudices, rattling off braggadocian yarns, cursing women drivers, Jake rolls from Alabama to Nevada while Sonny dithers disapproval and privately admires the old man's defiance of time and common sense. Mr. Hemphill provides an amusing panorama of conditions on the road and deftly conveys the affection underlying the father-son bickering. Jake is a truly memorable character and, in his own crotchety way, heroic.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI by Alicia Craig Faxon. Abbeville, \$85.00. In 1848, that year of widespread revolution, a group of young painters in England christened themselves the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and issued a manifesto of artistic principles. The Pre-Raphaelite manifesto was the first of its kind. It was brief and reasonably lucid, and if the Pre-Raphaelites had foreseen the

turgid length of subsequent artistic manifestos, they might have let their painting speak for itself. Rossetti was one of this band of rebels against the domination of the Royal Academy. (Allegedly he declared, years later, "that if the Royal Academy were to elect him a member, he would immediately put the matter into the hands of his solicitor.") Rossetti was not the most successful of the group financially, nor was he knighted, like his fellows Millais and Burne-Jones, but he remains the most interesting of the brotherhood, for he was a poet and translator as well as a painter. He was also a wit, once describing a friend's new furniture as "tables and chairs like incubi and succubi." Dr. Faxon, as an art historian, has concentrated on the intellectual themes underlying Rossetti's paintings, his brilliant color technique, his use of symbols, and the development of his style from medieval angularity to Titianesque rotundity. This is all very fine and useful for appreciating the excellent plates in her excellent book, but one cannot help wishing for more quotation from her highly quotable subject.

AT THE COURT OF NAPOLEON: Memoirs of the Duchesse D'Abrantès edited by Olivier Bernier. Doubleday, \$19.95. Her name was Laure Permon, her family were rich bourgeois from Corsica, and her mother was a friend of the mother of Napoleon Bonaparte. Equipped with beauty and wit, Laure naturally became part of the Napoleonic government circle, and eventually (largely because she needed money) wrote about it. Her recollections contain much visual detail on frippery and fashion, but also a warts-and-all picture of the Emperor and his associates. One sees the court deteriorate from confidence and informality to intrigue and etiquette through telling vignettes, some of them decidedly amusing, such as Marshall Ney's encounter with proper court dress, which had, until that horrifying moment, escaped his notice. Things came to such a pass of dullness that an exasperated Napoleon "accused his court of being morose, adding, 'I order you to have fun.' For once, he was not obeyed." The Duchesse was a loyal Bonapartist, but she was never a mindless worshipper.

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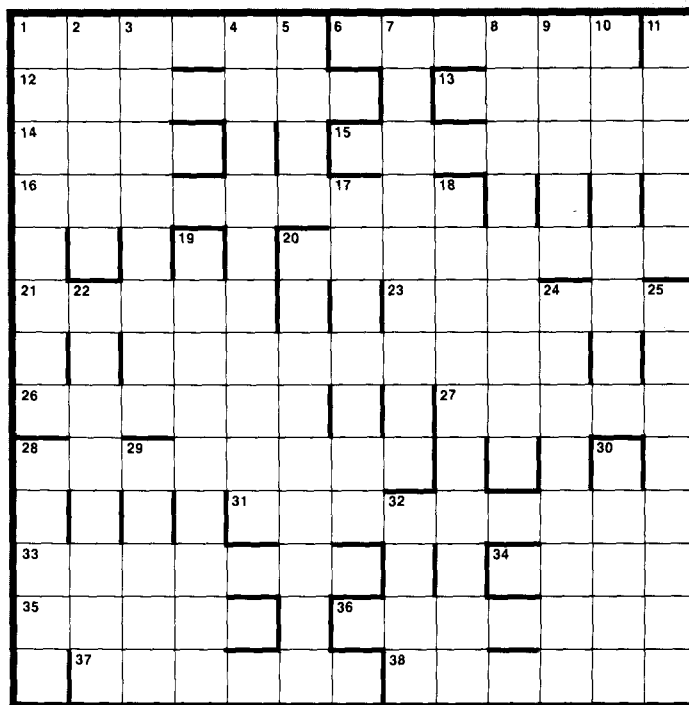
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THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

IN THE SPIRIT

The trick to entering the Down answers into this puzzle's diagram can be explained by the unclued New Year's message in the diagram's center. Answers include three proper nouns; 26 Across is not in *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.



The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 87.

ACROSS

1. Great New Year's—all oiled up (6)
6. Ultimately, boys call girls jerks (6)
12. Dress cut in one place (7)
13. In European country, turning point for boat (5)
14. Start off painting mountain range (4)
15. Cartridges in a liquid, pungent chemical (7)
16. God of the underworld lacks fires (9)
20. Catered Italian bread, gulping down choice of wine (8)
21. Drinks with lake and pond residents (5)
23. Cider's mixed in kitchenware (6)
26. Antelope badly ailing (6)
27. Apology about new full assemblies (5)
28. Republican running after vote for atomic matter (8)
31. Bursts knocked sniper out (9)
33. Wounded cave-dwellers left nest (7)

34. Wife's deceit cut short (4)
35. British intelligence has returned to address in India (5)
36. Cryptic phial containing a victory coin of Iran (7)
37. Language style captivates German university (6)
38. Collection of musicians established in group (6)

DOWN

1. Examining metal gauge on back of German car (8)
2. Member of a monastery earlier in time (5)
3. Vital fluid turned black—that's fair (8)
4. Puts back direct reports (10)
5. Last of antelope on a small yellow plain (4)
7. It is so true about today's essence: people change (9)
8. Spot (dog) eats note made of tiny bits (9)

9. Lifeless bear's extremity caught in one trap (5)
10. Airplane parts go bad and drone the wrong way (8)
11. Place in Sri Lanka and in Kentucky (5)
17. Dope endlessly consumed by one American romantic (7)
18. Sends spring into trenches (10)
19. Designed basic long houses (9) (*two words*)
20. Aroused, Johnny's sidekick gets into riding gear (9) (*two words*)
22. To have an effect, one lit into spouse (8)
24. Make a long speech to each old class (8)
25. Actions of L.A. comedians keeping us around (8)
28. Magazine edition is almost fat (5)
29. Theo swims around a lake (5)
30. Hall that's high-ceilinged and long in the middle (5)
32. Green snake makes surprised sound (4)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

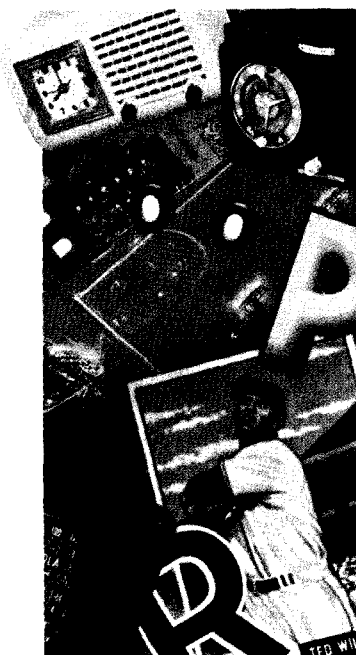
WORD HISTORIES

Etymologies derived from the files of the Dictionary of American Regional English

BY CRAIG M. CARVER

blooper

When Truett Banks (Rip) Sewell, a former pitcher for the Pittsburgh Pirates, died last September, he was remembered in obituaries for a special *blooper* pitch known as the *cephus* ball. The *cephus* was a high arching pitch that often reached a height of twenty-five feet before plummeting toward the plate.



Sewell was successful with the unorthodox pitch until he lobbed one too many to Ted Williams in the 1946 All-Star Game, and Williams hit a home run. Sewell referred to the pitch hit by Williams as a "Sunday Super Dooper Blooper." The term *blooper* as applied to baseball emerged in the 1930s and first meant a lofting fly ball hit to the space behind the infield and in front of the outfielders. (Such a hit has many other names, of course; H. L. Mencken's list includes *Texas leaguer*, *nubber*, *sinker*, *banjo*, *humpie*, and *squib*.) The oldest meaning of *blooper* (c. 1926) is a radio whose frequency causes other radios to howl or *bloop*, *bloop* being a fanciful imitation of the sound in question. It was probably the *blooping* sound's brevity and unexpectedness, reinforced by the similarity of *loop* (the *blooper* fly ball was also called a *looper*), that created the baseball usage. Similarly, the inappropriateness of a radio's suddenly *blooping* gave *blooper* the figurative sense of a publicly embarrassing blunder. As for *cephus*, the word is probably borrowed from an expression used in crap shooting.

sucker

The question in the minds of the reporters at Congressman Barney Frank's press conference last August was, Would he run for re-election? Frank admitted to being involved with a male prostitute who ran a sex-for-hire ring out of Frank's apartment. "I do not think I am going to be heavily penalized by the voters for the fact that I was *suckered*," Frank said, hinting strongly that he would run. In Middle English (c. 1380) a *sucker* (spelled *souker*) was an infant still feeding at its mother's breast. More commonly the term referred to an unweaned animal. Early in the nineteenth century *sucker* came to be used figuratively for a gullible person or a simpleton—one who, like a child, is naive and inexperienced. A quote attributed to P. T. Barnum embodies both the childish and foolish senses of the word: "There's a *sucker* born every minute." (*Sucker* at the time was a common circus term for a patron.) By the 1930s the noun *sucker* had spun off the verb *to sucker*, meaning to trick or hoodwink. The noun *sucker* has another meaning that is relevant to Frank's



situation; it can refer to a person who lives at the expense of another, by either extortion or parasitism. Edward Hall, a sixteenth-century chronicler, wrote of the "flatterers to the kyng [Henry VI] . . . *suckers* of his purse and robbers of his subjects." The Scottish poet Allan Ramsay produced the following in 1728: "This *sucker* thinks nane wise, But him that can to immense riches rise."

protocol

The commemoration last year of the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War brought vocal protests in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania aimed at the "secret *protocols*" to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939, which provided for the division of Poland and the Baltic states between Germany and the Soviet Union. Although pacts like that one have no doubt been concluded since the invention of writing, and probably before, they have been called *protocols* only since the Middle Ages. The English term is borrowed from Middle

French *prothocolle* (the draft of a document or the record of a transaction). This in turn was borrowed from Medieval Latin *protocollum*, which had the same meaning, but additionally had the older, Greek sense of *protokollon* (the first sheet or

flyleaf of a manuscript). That word derives from *proto* (first) and *kolla* (glue), and referred to a sheet glued to the outside of a papyrus roll. It recorded the date and described the contents and origin of the unbound document, and allowed

a reader to get a sense of the document without having to unroll the whole thing. *Protocol* was at first used in English only with regard to documents of international diplomacy. By the late nineteenth century, however, it had come to refer to an official record of procedures in an autopsy or a scientific experiment. By the 1940s this sense had been extended to the rules of conduct in affairs of state. ("[Truman] felt that it would not be good *protocol* for him to be out hobnobbing with an Englishman out of office at the very time that the man now in charge of Britain's foreign affairs is in Washington" — *Washington Post*, 1949.)



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